

100TH ISSUE SPECIAL EDITION

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GUILLERMO DEL TORO

GUEST EDITS YOUR ANNIVERSARY SPECTACULAR

✪ "BLADE RUNNER IS BEYOND SCIENCE FICTION, IT'S A POEM TO FILM"

✪ "HP LOVECRAFT IS TO ME WHAT TOLKIEN IS TO PETER JACKSON"

✪ PLUS HELLBOY, FRANKENSTEIN, MAD MAX & MORE

DAMN FINE PREVIEW

TWIN PEAKS SEASON 3

The dark secret behind
Agent Cooper's comeback

THE END OF AN ERA

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Martin Freeman, Ian McKellen and
more on the battle for Middle-Earth

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DAREDEVIL ON TV //
JUSTICE LEAGUE //
CAPTAIN AMERICA 3 //
PREDESTINATION //

FASTEST MAN ALIVE

THE FLASH

One-on-one with Grant Gustin

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ISSUE 100

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7 DEC: LONDON COMIC MART

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grew up in a very, very strange time and a very, very strange place, which is Mexico. In the Sixties and Seventies

we were getting all these movies without the notion that they were cult. I grew up with Osamu Tezuka anime almost at the same time that a kid in Japan would. They were being distributed in Mexico within six months of the release in Japan.

So I grew up with Osamu Tezuka, I grew up with Kaiju movies, I grew up with Universal monster movies, Terence Fisher, Hammer films, Mario Bava – all this explosion of fantasy that was happening worldwide. I saw Spanish horror movies like *Tomb Of The Blind Dead*, or I saw a great British-American co-production like *Raw Meat*. I grew up at a time where my week would be going to see a Hammer or Roger Corman film. I would watch Universal monsters on TV, and I would go to the grocery store and buy *Famous Monsters Of Filmland*.

So it was a privileged childhood in that all those things were not readily available back then, so they had an incredible sense of value. I'm not sure how kids now would feel about things, because it's impossible for me to imagine a world where I can Google, say, Mario Bava and I can find 100 clips for free on YouTube, and I can find a way to download his movies – paying or for free – and basically access any content I want about any author, director or movie ever made electronically, when for me it was a huge deal.

For example, one of my favourite books in the world, of which I own five copies, is a *Penguin Encyclopaedia of Horror*. I would sit in the same way that I would sit and read the ads in the back

of *Famous Monsters*, and dream of reading those paperbacks and ordering those model kits. In the same way, with the *Penguin Encyclopaedia Of Horror* I used to say, "Oh my god, I've got to get this book, that book – I've got to know this author and that author," and that's one of the things that I try as a person to bring into my work: I bring an almost evangelical fervour for what I love. For me, it's not enough to make movies. I edit a book series for *Penguin* that hopefully does the same thing that the *Penguin* books did for me when I was a kid. I tried to honour everybody I know in *The Simpsons* opening animation [for the episode "Treehouse Of Horror XXIV" in 2013] to make people aware not of me and my movies, but of me and my love for those movies. I try to give lectures about film in cinemateques around the world; I think my work is in that sense very apostolic in favour of monsters.

I would say without any fear of exaggerating that it's been since I can remember, literally, going back to the crib, I was already bent that way. I think the earliest memory I have of anything fantastic was a TV series called *The Outer Limits*. *The Outer Limits*, *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* and *Twilight Zone* – it came from TV, really; the earliest memories, because I was at home and I was exposed to this. But I immediately felt incredibly compelled by the images.

The strange thing is that because it started so early in my life, it takes many, many years for me to realise that not everybody likes that stuff, so I was a completely sincere weirdo. I didn't know I was weird, but people certainly took care of that!



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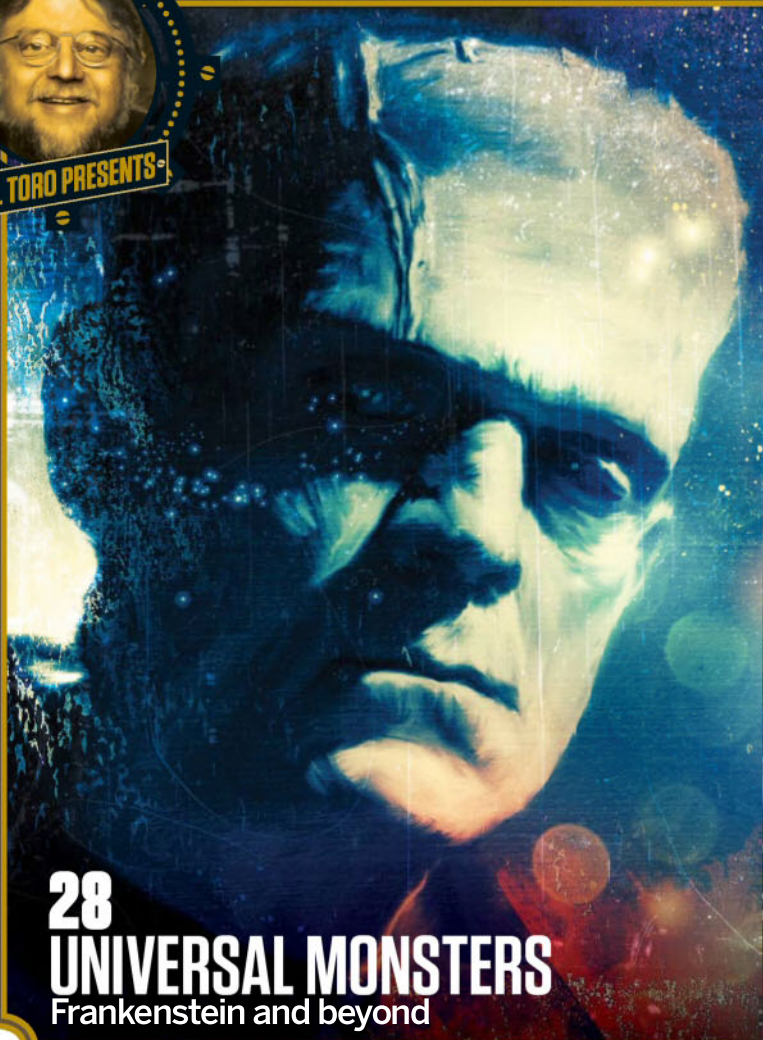
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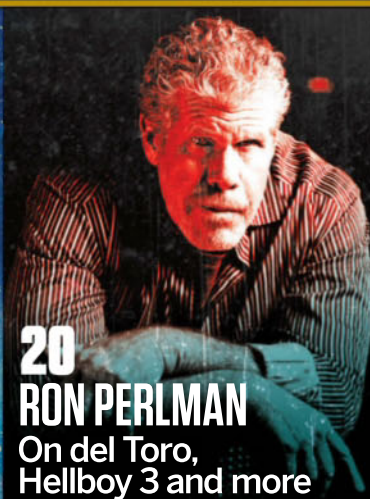
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MEET THE TEAM

Q. What is your favourite Guillermo del Toro moment?



James Hoare
Editor in Chief

A. *The Mimic* subway
That derelict 1920s station was my first glimpse into his world.



Jonathan Hatfull
Senior Staff Writer

A. *Santi in The Devil's Backbone*
Chilling and otherworldly.



Poppy-Jay Palmer
Staff Writer

A. *Hannibal* gets eaten
His shoe getting spat out by the Kaiju in *Pacific Rim* is hilarious.



Steve Wright
Production Editor

A. *Pale Man* sequence
The scariest GdT moment, and *Pan's Labyrinth's* iconic scene.



Marcus Faint
Senior Designer

A. *Hellboy* opening
Sets it up beautifully and leaves you in no doubt that this is a GdT flick.



Jodie Tyley
Contributor

A. *Tour of Bleak House*
Del Toro's man cave is an entire house fit for a geek icon.



PORTAL

Your essential, trustworthy and unrivalled guide to the latest genre happenings

NEWS

SUPERHERO-OFF

JUSTICE LEAGUE VS AVENGERS

The battle for superhero supremacy heats up as Marvel and DC reveal the next decade's film roster

WORDS STEVE WRIGHT

It would appear that time rests for no man – or super-man, for that matter. Despite *Avengers: Age Of Ultron* and *Batman V Superman: Dawn Of Justice* both still a way off being released, comic titans DC and Marvel are looking to the distant future, having unveiled their film release schedules up until 2020.

DC struck first on 15 October. As well as confirming the 2016 release of *Batman V Superman*, they revealed that the *Justice League* movies would be split into two parts – to be unleashed in 2017 and 2019 respectively. We also got confirmation that the Gal Gadot-starring *Wonder Woman* was slated for 2017, as well as the reveal that *End Of Watch* director David Ayer would be helming a *Suicide Squad* movie.

There were further solo outings confirmed for *The Flash* (2018, starring *We Need To Talk*

About Kevin's Ezra Miller), *Aquaman* (2018, Jason Momoa), *Shazam* (2019, Dwayne Johnson), *Cyborg* (2020, Ray Fisher) and a currently cast-less *Green Lantern* reboot, also for 2020.

Not to be outdone, Marvel hit back with an announcement of their own. On 28 October, Marvel Studios head Kevin Feige, accompanied by Robert Downey Jr and Chris Evans, took to the stage to reveal Marvel's entire roster for Phase Three – and what a reveal it was.

The first to be announced was *Captain America: Civil War*, which as previously rumoured will centre around the 2006 comics storyline in which Cap faces off against Iron Man. In a welcome bit of news, it was also revealed by Feige that the Black Panther (played by *Draft Day* and *Gods Of Egypt's* Chadwick Boseman, who appeared on stage with Feige and co) would be "a big part" of *Civil War*, before fronting his own solo movie in 2017.

Further sequels were announced in the form of *Thor: Ragnarok* for 2017 (also based on a recent comic-book storyline) and *Guardians Of The Galaxy 2* (also 2017), while outings were confirmed for *Doctor Strange* in 2016 (although strong rumours of Benedict Cumberbatch's casting in the lead role remained unverified), *Inhumans* in 2018, and *Captain Marvel* also in 2018 (the Carol Danvers version rather than the Kree Mar-vell, in an exciting turn for the books), representing Marvel's first solo female outing.

The biggest reveal, however, was that *Age Of Ultron* sequel *Avengers: Infinity War* would be split

into two parts, to be released in 2018 and 2019. In a particularly exciting twist of fate, *Part 2* will compete directly with *Justice League: Part 2* – needless to say, summer 2019 is going to be a very exciting one indeed.

With Marvel now featuring so many movies in its stable, fitting them all in will be a challenge, but speaking in a Q&A session after the event, Feige was confident that it's one they can face, while appearing to dismiss any thoughts that they were following DC's lead: "I think that's a challenge that we've faced for many, many years. My general feeling is: let's stick to our plan, let's keep doing what we believe in, let's keep doing what the audience is telling us we're doing right. Our plan has never altered one way or the other based on what anyone else is doing."

Considering the similarities between their planned output, we'll choose to take this with a pinch of salt. Still, the news to come out of the two publishing houses is welcome, notably the releases of *Shazam*, *Cyborg*, *Wonder Woman*, *Black Panther* and *Captain Marvel*, which represent steps forward for superhero movies with regards encompassing wider demographics.

More than anything, the race for superhero supremacy on the big screen is now well and truly on. We can't wait to see how it turns out...

Avengers: Age Of Ultron will be released in cinemas on 24 April 2015, and *Batman V Superman: Dawn Of Justice* will be out on 25 March 2016.



THE HEROIC AGE

Marvel and DC's dates for your diary



010 TWIN PEAKS



Five things we want to see when *Twin Peaks* returns to our TVs

013 DAREDEVIL



Charlie Cox speaks about the Netflix series at NYCC

014 BURYING THE EX



Gremlins director Joe Dante on his latest feature



Among DC and Marvel's roster is a 2019 face-off between the Justice League and Avengers (inset).

Justice League:

Part 1
17 Nov 2017

The Flash
23 Mar 2018

Aquaman
27 July 2018

Shazam
5 April 2019

Justice League:

Part 2
14 Jun 2019

Cyborg
3 Apr 2020

Green Lantern
19 Jun 2020



Avengers: Infinity War – Part 1
4 May 2018

Captain Marvel
6 Jul 2018

Inhumans
2 Nov 2018

Avengers: Infinity War – Part 2
3 May 2019



Civil War saw Iron Man and Captain America come to blows.

FIGHT FOR FREEDOM

CAP 3 GOES TO WAR

Captain America: Civil War will also star Black Panther

WORDS STEVE WRIGHT

As DC pit their two biggest characters against each other in *Batman V Superman: Dawn Of Justice*, Marvel is following suit, with *Captain America: Civil War* being based on Brian Michael Bendis's celebrated comic-book arc.

The storyline in the comics sees the proposal of a Superhuman Registration Act, in which all costumed heroes are required to disclose their identities to the government. Iron Man leads the Pro-Registration side, while Captain America opposes the ruling and goes underground.

To this end, Robert Downey Jr will apparently take on de facto antagonist duties as Tony Stark, which will see him clash with Chris Evans' Cap. Since the two have been friendly so far on screen, it will be interesting to see how the sparks fly.

Although Downey's casting is yet to be officially confirmed, it seems likely, with Iron Man himself telling *Yahoo! Movies* that the third *Captain America* film is "gonna be huge", and returning co-director Anthony Russo saying to *movies.com* "I can't divulge who is going to be in the film, but I think fans are going to freak out when they hear about it."

However, Downey might not be referring to himself. T'Challa, aka the Black Panther, will star in *Civil War* (while speaking at the big reveal, Marvel chief Kevin Feige confirmed that he would be "in costume") before headlining his own solo feature in 2017.

The King of Wakanda will be played by rising

star Chadwick Boseman, whose genre output includes an episode of *Fringe*, and Alex Proyas' upcoming *Gods Of Egypt*.

One of the first black superhero to appear in mainstream comics, the casting of Boseman is certainly a step forward in an age when Marvel's last black leading man was Wesley Snipes in 2004's *Blade: Trinity*, with the likes of Falcon (Anthony Mackie), Jim Rhodes (Don Cheadle) and Nick Fury (Samuel L Jackson) having to make do with supporting roles.

Captain America: Civil War will be released in cinemas on 29 April 2016, and *Black Panther* will be out on 3 November 2017.



IN A WORLD OF POSSIBILITIES

What are the chances of these comic storylines being used?

WORLD WAR HULK

Plot: After escaping from an interplanetary exile, the Green Goliath returns to Earth to wreak havoc on those who wronged him.

Chances of happening: Has been heavily rumoured, and considering his potential as a bad guy we'd say this will likely happen at some point.



SECRET INVASION

Plot: Shape-changing aliens known as Skrulls launch an attack on Earth, having previously infiltrated the planet disguised as some of our best-loved heroes.

Chances of happening: It would certainly throw things up in the air regarding who you could trust. It may even provide the chance to reboot characters who haven't been done justice. We're looking at you Hawkeye...



INFINITY

Plot: The Avengers charge off into space, leaving Earth's street-level heroes to defend the planet.

Chances of happening: Could make for a decent storyline to bring Marvel's Netflix gang of Daredevil, Luke Cage, Iron Fist and Jessica Jones together. Probably won't happen though...



AVENGERS VS X-MEN

Plot: With the Phoenix Force on its way back to Earth, the planet's two foremost super-teams decide that the best course of action is to have a big smackdown.

Chances of happening: Pretty impossible currently, seeing as different companies own the rights. Still, an *Avengers* movie seemed unlikely once upon a time...



LET'S ROCK!

THAT GUM YOU LIKE IS BACK IN STYLE

5 Things we want to see from *Twin Peaks* Season 3

WORDS JONATHAN HATFULL

It's official: David Lynch and Mark Frost are bringing *Twin Peaks* back for a third serving of damn fine coffee, cherry pie and mystery. After enduring decades of sub-par shows claiming to be following in the footsteps of this masterpiece, we'll finally get to see Agent Dale Cooper, Sheriff Harry S Truman, the Log Lady and BOB remind us why there are no substitutes. Here are five things that we want to see...



1 BRING EVERYONE BACK

It was recently announced that Mark Frost is writing a novel that will fill in at least some of the 25 year gap. While Season Two notoriously ended on a massive cliffhanger, we'd love to see everyone back if humanly possible. Obviously we need Cooper, but we absolutely need receptionist Lucy Moran (and of course Deputy Andy), Norma and Shelly at the Double R diner, Ben Horne and his Brie-loving brother Jerry, not to mention BOB and the inhabitants of the Red Room – everybody, basically. And Ray Wise, of course. That goes without saying.



2 DON'T GIVE US TOO MANY ANSWERS

It's a well-known fact that Lynch and Frost resented the fact that the network forced them to solve the murder of Laura Palmer early on in the second season. The murder of Laura was a starting point; it wasn't the be-all and end-all. While we certainly want to know whether the good Cooper is still in the Lodge and can't leave, we don't want the show to give us any easy solutions.



3 JULEE CRUISE AND ANGELO BADALAMENTI

Music is so crucial to *Twin Peaks*. That atmosphere of soap-opera Americana with a haunting deep dark secret underneath was beautifully brought to life by Lynch regular Angelo Badalamenti and the inimitable Julee Cruise. It would be great to have the characters stopping in for a drink at the Road House and have Ms Cruise standing on stage, crooning *Falling* for her admiring audience.



4 DON'T IGNORE THE FILM

The 1992 movie *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk With Me* has long been a contentious topic among fans. Some think that it was simply too dark and showed the last days of Laura Palmer in too much detail, but it's a crucial chapter in the mythology. It might be a long shot, but we'd love to see David Bowie's Phillip Jeffries reappear, or maybe we could find out whatever happened to the Kiefer Sutherland-tormenting badass Agent Chester Desmond.



5 LOTS OF JUNK FOOD

Times may have changed, but we'd be frankly heartbroken if the people of *Twin Peaks* started counting their calories. Coop consumed superhuman quantities of doughnuts and pie during his time in *Twin Peaks* despite his obvious interest in spiritual and physical health, and it would be an absolute tragedy to lose that.

Season Three of *Twin Peaks* will air on Showtime in 2016.

AVENGERS: REASSEMBLE

The five best moments from the *Age Of Ultron* trailer

WORDS POPPY-JAY PALMER



1 The Maximoffs

Quicksilver and Scarlet Witch have finally joined the party, and they both look pretty badass. But whose side are they on?



2 The Hulkbustor

There has always been rivalry on the team, though no one expected science bros Stark and Banner to duke it out – but is it Tony, or an Ultron-controlled suit?



3 Hulk and Black Widow

After the Hulk almost killed Natasha in *Avengers Assemble*, them touching palms is a big step. Maybe this will be the start of something new for them both.



4 Cap's broken shield

Since Captain America's shield is supposedly indestructible, Ultron may end up being more powerful than expected. You have permission to panic.



5 Ultron's not a puppet

Disney may have used *I've Got No Strings* from *Pinocchio*, but the result was very creepy. "You're all puppets," says Ultron, "tangled in strings."

Avengers: Age Of Ultron will be released in cinemas on 24 April 2015.

FIVE THINGS WITH ROXANNE MCKEE

The star of *Dominion* and *Game Of Thrones* on her war on the angels

WORDS JONATHAN HATFULL

1 War on Heaven

Roxanne McKee has established herself as one of the genre's rising stars, leapfrogging from *Hollyoaks* to *Game Of Thrones* and a starring role on the hit Syfy series *Dominion*. A pseudo-sequel to Scott Stewart's 2010 fantasy-horror flick *Legion*, it finds the human race locked in a battle with angels who want to wipe them off the face of the Earth. "It wasn't until after I got the part that I watched the film," she tells us. "So it wasn't so much sold to me; more that I just read the script and really enjoyed it. I enjoyed the multi-faceted dimensions of the script. I know it has a cult feel to it, but I think it's an intelligent idea, and there's room for a lot of expansion in the future."

2 Futuristic princess

McKee plays Claire Riesen, who's in a privileged position among the inhabitants of Vega (that's former Las Vegas) as the daughter of General Edward Riesen (Alan Dale). "She's kind of like a modern-day princess, or rather a futuristic princess – she's the closest thing that Vega has to a princess!" she reveals. "She's grown up with wealth, prosperity, protection and relative comfort, given the circumstances of the world that they live in. She goes on a self-awakening throughout the series, and she falls in love, and you see this young innocent girl turn into a political animal. She goes through some hugely harrowing experiences; at the end, she becomes darker than she is at the beginning."

3 All about the character

Although McKee has been making a name for herself in the genre, she tells us that it's all about the role. Just because your show is set in a post-apocalyptic Nevada where humans are at war with a vengeful, bad-ass Heavenly Host, that doesn't mean she'll jump on board if the character's not interesting. "I guess I am interested in fantasy – it would be a lie to say that I'm not, but what I do for the role is not so much think about the fantasy element of it; I think about how real I can make it and how relatable I can make the character," she tells us. "Rather than thinking to make the character sort of wacky and out there, I want people to feel like they identify with my characters in some way – and I really hope I've given you guys that."

4 Not just a handmaiden anymore

The role of a General's daughter is certainly a step-up from servitude, as most readers will probably recognise McKee from her role as Doreah, the treacherous handmaiden of Daenerys Targaryen in *Game Of Thrones*, and she tells us that the show has become a high watermark for her. "Of course," she tells us. "It was a fantastic show to have been a part of. I'm so grateful that I've met Dan [Weiss] and David [Benioff], and I hope to work with them in the future. George RR Martin has this incredible mind that he's been able to open up and pour onto paper, and I feel really lucky that I've been able to tell a little bit of his story."

5 Hope for the future

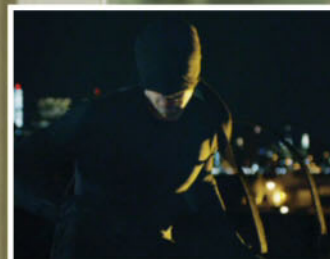
Although *Dominion* is only just starting here in the UK, it's been a tremendous success for Syfy on the other side of the Atlantic – so much so, in fact, that the fledgling show has been given the green light for a second season. However, despite our best efforts, McKee isn't giving anything away. "Do you know what? I really wish that I could!" she laughs. "I haven't got a clue, but knowing Vaun [Wilmott, creator] there's going to be some crazy twists going on. Certainly for my character there was such a huge evolution. I think she's going to be a completely different person, and then I hope we take her to the opposite of that again by the end of Season Two. I hope it's all over the place and exciting and full of depth."

Dominion is currently airing on Syfy on Thursday nights at 10pm.

"I FEEL REALLY LUCKY
THAT I'VE BEEN ABLE
TO TELL A LITTLE
BIT OF GEORGE RR
MARTIN'S STORY"



THE MAN WITHOUT FEAR



THE DAREDEVIL MAY CARE

What we learned about Marvel's first Netflix superhero series at New York Comic-Con WORDS STEVE WRIGHT

1. NEW CASTING

A number of familiar faces from the comic-book panels will be making their way to the big screen. Reporter Ben Urich will be played by Vondie Curtis-Hall, Bob Gunton has been cast as mobster Leland Owlsley, aka 'The Owl', and Ayelet Zurer is Vanessa, usually the wife of the Kingpin (Vincent D'Onofrio) in the comics.

2. DAWSON IS NIGHT NURSE

Speculation on the nature of *Sin City* star Rosario Dawson's role has been rife (Elektra, Echo and Typhoid Mary have all been mooted at some point), but it has been confirmed that she will be playing a character by the name of Claire Temple. It's a different identity to her comic-book counterpart, but having been described as "a nurse who works at night," by Marvel's Head of Television Jeph Loeb, the inspiration for her character as Marvel's foremost private superhero healthcare practitioner is pretty clear.

3. BACK IN BLACK

Rather than his traditional red attire, Matt Murdock's outfit in the new series

has been totally reimagined as a darker, ninja-esque costume. It seems heavily inspired by John Romita Jr's depiction of the character in *Daredevil: The Man Without Fear* – although it also bears a worrying resemblance to what he wears in the 1989 TV movie *The Trial Of The Incredible Hulk*...

4. CHARLIE COX LOOKS THE PART

Those who've seen the on-screen Matt Murdock in HBO's *Boardwalk Empire* will be aware of his charisma, but it's still reassuring to see that he makes for a convincing Man Without Fear. The photo of him dressed down in lawyer attire – complete with red shades and bruising – looks very Daredevil-esque. Granted we haven't seen a lot of him, but so far the signs are good.

5. IT'LL BE MORE COMPLEX THAN THE FILM

Despite Ben Affleck's best efforts, for many the 2003 movie was a sub-par actioner with a poor script and a blaring Noughties nu-metal soundtrack.

The series sounds more promising, however: speaking at Comic-Con, Cox seemed to appreciate the complexity of the role: "There are so many aspects. There's the blindness and physicality. Making a show is about human emotion, conflict and turmoil. When meeting a man who's a lawyer by day and believes in law and justice and then a man by night is someone who takes the law into his own hands. He deals with battles dealing with that concept."

6. AN AGENTS OF SHIELD CROSSOVER WILL PROBABLY HAPPEN

One of the big selling points of Marvel's output is that everything's set in the same world, although prior to Comic-Con there was no indication of how insular *Daredevil* will be. Loeb appeared to confirm the likelihood that Murdock will cross paths with other characters from the House of Ideas' stable, saying: "I think, you know, it's all connected man." Cue mass celebration.

Daredevil will air on Netflix sometime in 2015.



POWERING UP

Brian Michael Bendis on finally bringing *Powers* to TV

WORDS EDWARD GROSS

"It's not a dead-superhero-of-the-week kind of show," proclaims original comics writer and producer Brian Michael Bendis. "That would get old real fast."

The 'it' in question is the Sony PlayStation TV series adaptation of Bendis and artist Michael Avon Oeming's long-running comic *Powers*, which follows the exploits of homicide detectives Christian Walker (Sharlto Copley) and Deena Pilgrim (Susan Heyward). Both are assigned cases involving superheroes and supervillains, who have become commonplace in the world. Their division within homicide is known as 'Powers'.

The first issue of *Powers* the comic-book was first published in 2000, and has been in development as a film version for nearly as long.

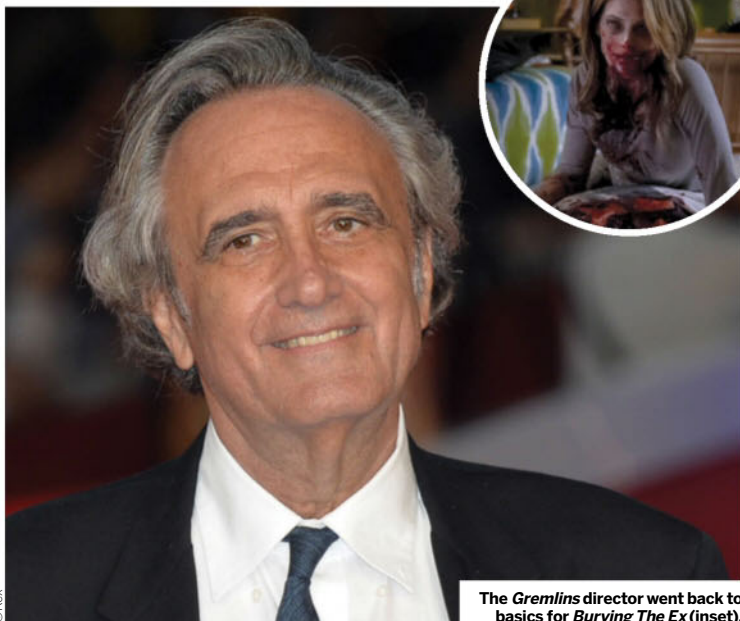
"Mike was drawing the book in a security booth in a parking garage he was working at," reflects Bendis. "That money got him out of the parking garage. Back in 2000, when they bought it, they didn't know what they had yet. It was much darker than what Sony's features were doing. They were all hopped up on *Spider-Man* [at the time] and it's not *Spider-Man*. And it clearly isn't a movie. It's a TV show. It's an ongoing procedural."

The project's executive producer, David Engel, recognised this and went to Sony to say, "You know, if you move it over to television, we could have a go at this for real." The next day, that's what happened.

Explains Bendis, "We made a pilot, and it was interesting enough for them to put a writer's room together, but there was something off. Everyone involved was very talented, but sometimes things don't come together. [Novelist/comics writer] Charlie Huston was hired, and he wrote an episode that was fantastic. It was funny, it was dark, it was dangerous. I wrote to the president of the network and said, 'By the way, if you're looking to find *Powers*, this is it.' So many other people agreed that they ended up firing everybody else except for Charlie, and Charlie was then running the show. It was his version that got us here."

Powers will air on the PlayStation Network in December in the US.

UNDEAD EX-GIRL



The *Gremlins* director went back to basics for *Burying The Ex* (inset).

JOE DANTE RETURNS

The genre king on his latest film, *Burying The Ex* WORDS OLIVER PFEIFFER

From his enjoyable B-movie *Piranha* to genre favourites like *The Howling*, the *Gremlins* series and *Matinee*, Joe Dante has made a career out of masterfully integrating horror with humour. Now, with low-budget zombie comedy *Burying The Ex*, (his first full-length feature since 2009's *The Hole*) he admits that his career appears to have come full circle.

"I've always thought that there's a connection between horror and comedy. You can play both of those genres against one another and they support each other," says Dante. "Horror is usually absurd, and there's a point at which if you don't do it right it becomes silly."

Burying The Ex revolves around movie memorabilia store worker and fellow film buff Max (Anton Yelchin), who is dating Evelyn (Ashley Greene), an overbearing and possessive girlfriend who moves in with him. After a freak accident claims her life, Max falls for the better-suited Olivia (Alexandra Daddario). However, things turn nasty when his jealous ex rises from the grave in zombie form.

"I thought the writing [by debut scribe Alan Trezza] was funny, and it wasn't an expensive film, it didn't have a lot of characters, and was something I could make quickly and cheaply," reveals Dante, whose economical

training with Roger Corman no doubt equipped him for the film's 20-day shoot. "The trick is to get the best out of those 20 days," he continues. "In this case we worked in locations that were within seven blocks of each other, so we ended up spending the majority of the day actually shooting instead of wasting time, which a lot of big movies do. We made it cheaply, but it was the kind of story that didn't suffer, because it's really a character piece."

Being yet another variation of the overpopulated zombie flick and having directed the undead before in the celebrated 'Homecoming' episode of *Masters Of Horror*, Dante is fully aware of the creative challenges in offering something new. "The more mainstream they become the more people see them and are aware of the clichés and it just becomes harder and harder to do something that's different," acknowledges the filmmaker. "That's always the challenge of making these kind of movies; you've got to keep trying something new, and it becomes more difficult to surprise people with things that they don't expect when they have seen the same story so many times before."

Burying The Ex will be released in the US in 2015.

GOOD OMENS WE BRING

The director of the BBC's latest Neil Gaiman radio adap reveals all WORDS STEPHEN KELLY

Following on in the footsteps of *Neverwhere*, *Good Omens* is the latest Neil Gaiman novel to receive the Radio 4 treatment.

Co-author Terry Pratchett once said that the difference between him and fellow author Neil Gaiman in their attitude to film and TV adaptations is that, "[Neil] doesn't believe they're going to happen until he's sitting in his seat eating popcorn, and I don't believe they're going to happen."

Last year, Radio 4 rescued Gaiman's urban fantasy novel *Neverwhere* from languishing in film development hell with an audio play that included such stars as James McAvoy, Benedict Cumberbatch and Natalie Dormer. Now, they're doing the same to the pair's 1991 apocalyptic comedy *Good Omens*, a novel that was once going to be a film directed by Terry Gilliam and, years later, a TV series by Terry Jones.

"There had been attempts at doing it before, but the writers had given up," explains director Dirk Maggs, who also adapted 2013's *Neverwhere*. "Apparently I was the first writer to get to the end of it! It wasn't easy, but it was worth it. Neil is a very funny writer when he wants to be, and this is a funny, divine comedy. Then you've got Terry, who comes with a shared heritage of British radio comedy. There's bits in *Good Omens* where it's pure [Radio 4 classic] *Round The Horne*."

A Monty Python-esque farce, *Good Omens* follows angel Aziraphale and demon Crowley, representatives of Heaven and Hell who go against orders in a bid to stop the apocalypse. The mismatched pair are played respectively by Mark Heap and Peter Serafinowicz. "Peter and Mark are just brilliant," says Maggs. "They've developed the characters a lot by going off script at times; the result is very rich."

Joining Serafinowicz and Heap are the likes of *Merlin*'s Colin Morgan, *Being Human*'s Phil Davis and *Sherlock*'s Louise Brealey.

"It's been a much bigger cast than *Neverwhere*," Maggs explains. "The high point was when we were recording the big climax scenes and we had something like 15 actors in the space of an average living room. And in the read-through there were around 50 people in the room and just gales of laughter."

"It comes off the page beautifully, which is a relief as you never know if it will. There's also something strangely profound about it. It definitely has one of the most poignant endings I've ever worked one. Not a dry eye in the house. It's a real Christmas pudding of a play – lots and lots of raisins."

Good Omens will air on BBC Radio 4 in December 2014.



The cast and crew of *Good Omens*, with Neil Gaiman and director Dirk Maggs at the front.

SPLASHING AROUND

AQUAMAN MEANS BUSINESS

Making DC's sea king cool again in *Justice League: Throne Of Atlantis*

WORDS EDWARD GROSS

Despite DC looking to dominate cinemas in *Batman V Superman: Dawn Of Justice* and the small screen with *Gotham*, *Arrow* and *The Flash*, they aren't neglecting their animated output either. Having focused on The Flash in *Justice League: The Flashpoint Paradox* and Cyborg in *Justice League: War*, the spotlight will centre on Aquaman in *Justice League: Throne Of Atlantis*. "We wanted to ground Aquaman and make him different," offers writer Heath Corson. "This is an Aquaman who's unaware of his heritage and background. He finds himself drawn to the water, but he doesn't have any idea of who he really is and what he wants to be. It was an interesting place to start as we brought him to the position of being the King of Atlantis."

Adds producer James Tucker, "We've been trying to bring Aquaman back by giving him spotlight roles in different series. We had him on *Superman: The Animated Series*... as a guest star on *Justice League* and on *Batman: Brave And The Bold*. He's not navel-gazing and tortured; he likes being Aquaman."

"Anytime someone calls you to be a superhero, you say, 'Yeah!'" laughs Matt Lanter, the voice of Aquaman (and Anakin Skywalker in *Star Wars: The Clone Wars*). "To be a part of the *Justice League* has been awesome. It's been a fun challenge to make Aquaman cool again. I think this film really does it, and hopefully fans will think so too. It's a cool time where we can change the perception of these characters."

Justice League: Throne Of Atlantis will be released on DVD sometime in 2015.

SPACE MONKEYS?

STAR TREK VS PLANET OF THE APES

The writers on this new comic series featuring two of sci-fi's most loved franchises

WORDS EDWARD GROSS

When IDW and Boom! Studios announced a crossover comic miniseries that would bring the *Star Trek* and *Planet Of The Apes* universes together, it would have been easy to be cynical. But the creators behind it feel differently. "The biggest appeal is that, I think, these are by far the most influential science-fiction worlds of the late Sixties and early Seventies," offers co-writer Scott Tipton, "and to everyone's surprise, they fit together better than we expected."

That point was driven home to editor Sarah Gaydos at the recent New York Comic-Con. "I watched a lot of people pick up the free preview of the first issue," she relates. "Each one of them initially laughed at the idea, and then

immediately their demeanour 'switched' to, 'Wow, that is so cool!'"

Co-writer Dave Tipton points out that the story is tied into the themes and dilemmas associated with both franchises, saying, "The political and philosophical tensions we saw in the original *Star Trek* between the Federation and the Klingon Empire play an important role, as does the difficult position Taylor finds himself when thrust into Earth's future."

The question of how much interference is allowed has always been a big part of any *Trek* storyline. "And when it's Earth's history," muses Scott, "even a parallel Earth, those moral dilemmas become all the more prominent."

A parallel Earth would seem to be the only way to explain how Earth's future can be so radically different for each group. "That's the real question, isn't it?" laughs Scott Tipton. "Classic *Trek* has

always embraced the notion of the parallel universe, which made our storytelling quandaries a little easier to deal with."

Also much easier to deal with is that Colonel George Taylor will actually look like Charlton Heston. "I was so excited that we were given permission to draw Taylor in all his original grizzly glory," smiles artist Rachael Stott. "He's a really fun character to capture because he has such a distinctive appearance, and Heston uses such unique facial expressions and body language."

"That was so important to us," recalls Scott, "that Taylor can be represented in a story like this. Not to mention that the Kirk/Taylor clash is so much more iconic when it's Shatner and Heston on the page."



Star Trek/Planet Of The Apes by Scott Tipton, David Tipton and Rachael Stott is published by IDW, and out from December.

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*Halo: Nightfall: 5 episode live-action series is streaming only, and will initially be available on a weekly basis, and then on demand. Xbox One or Windows 8.1 and broadband internet required; ISP fees apply. Halo 5: Guardians Beta: Game disc required. Limited-time beta starts December 27, 2014, and ends January 22, 2015. Must be 17+. Xbox One, broadband internet (ISP fees apply) and Xbox LIVE Gold membership (sold separately) required. Halo: Nightfall and Halo 5: Guardians Beta dates, content, and features subject to change. See www.xbox.com/halo

A portrait of Guillermo del Toro, smiling and wearing glasses, is centered at the top. Surrounding him are various iconic movie monsters: Frankenstein's head to the left, a pale woman's face above him, a goat-headed creature to the right, and Hellboy's head in the bottom right. The background is a dark, swirling blue and green. The title 'GUILLERMO DEL TORO' is written in large, metallic, 3D letters across the middle. A blue tentacle is wrapped around the letter 'O'.

GUILLERMO DEL TORO

—◆ PRESENTS ◆—

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A close-up of Swamp Thing's face, with glowing red eyes and a green, textured skin, surrounded by green vines and leaves.



CRONOS

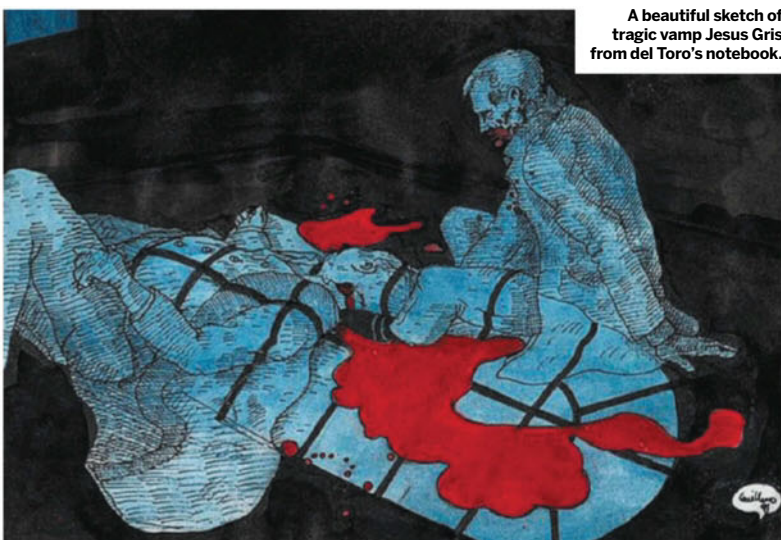
THE BLOOD IS THE LIFE

GUILLERMO DEL TORO REMEMBERS HIS FIRST FILM, MODERN VAMPIRE CLASSIC CRONOS, AND TELLS US WHY NOBODY ELSE IS DOING WHAT HE DOES...

WORDS JONATHAN HATFULL



Cronos marked the start of Ron Perlman and del Toro's team-up.



A beautiful sketch of tragic vamp Jesus Gris from del Toro's notebook.



The decaying Gris and his granddaughter face the violent Angel.



Del Toro's sketch of the violent conclusion to *Cabinet Of Curiosities*.

BEFORE HELLBOY AND PAN'S LABYRINTH, BEFORE THE DEVIL'S BACKBONE AND BLADE II, IT ALL STARTED WITH A DEVICE THAT HOUSES A VAMPIRIC INSECTOID CREATURE and an elderly gentleman licking a pool of blood from a bathroom floor.

In 1993, Guillermo del Toro combined the lessons learned on Mexican anthology horror TV show *La Hora Marcada* with his passion for the genre, and created one of the defining modern vampire movies. *Cronos* would become a calling card for the filmmaker; a beautifully shot, fantastically detailed and wonderfully atmospheric modern vampire tale that also acts as a powerful personal statement, to the extent that it even stars his regular collaborator Ron Perlman.

"Well, look, I just turned 50, and to this day, being completely candid, I don't know how to put value on what I do, but I know that nobody is doing what I do," del Toro tells us. "It may be good or it may be terrible, I have no fucking idea, but I knew from the get go when I was a kid that the story I wanted to tell with *Cronos*, nobody else was going to be interested in doing. I was

released the following year. While it seems glib to keep returning to one scene, that bathroom floor sequence happens during a lavish reception. The gowns and goblets are in the other room while our hero is committing a transgressive act on the floor.

Rather than presenting the audiences with a monster to be stopped, or exploring the sensual thrills that are experienced, it shows what the kindly, sympathetic and relatable Gris gains and loses by succumbing to power. Gris isn't becoming a part of some occult society; the device offers him life, virility and strength. However, it is also stripping him of his humanity, and could tear him away from the people he loves the most. Del Toro took the vampire story and made it his own, combining the intricate design of the device and its bizarre history with a truly affecting drama.

"I wanted to reformulate [the vampire genre] to some degree," del Toro remembers. "I think even *Pacific Rim*, which honours two genres in the Eastern culture, which are mecha and kaiju, even that one puts its own slant on the mecha and kaiju. I've never been a postmodern narrator. If anything, I

Guillermo on... *Cronos*

"It responded to the way monsters for me are real. In my opinion, fantasy and monsters and all of that should be photographed in a way that you would photograph a real actor. In other words, I need to create an extraordinarily visual world to then be able to gaze at a monster as if it was naturally belonging to that universe."

specifically trying to show a middle-class Mexican vampire – a guy that is a poor devil vampire, that needed to lick blood from the toilet floor, and basically a love story between a grandfather and a granddaughter, and the same certainty as *Pan's Labyrinth*. I don't think anyone would ever tell a fairy tale the way I wanted to tell it."

It tells the story of Jesus Gris (Federico Luppi), an antiques dealer living a quiet life with his wife and their granddaughter Aurora (Tamara Shanath). When he discovers a device resembling an insect, his curiosity is piqued. But he's not the only the interested party: a powerful man named De La Guardia (Claudio Brook) has been hunting for the Cronos device and the powers it can bestow. But all gifts come with a price. As Jesus gives into the temptation and incredible gift of the artefact, De La Guardia and his violent nephew Angel (Perlman) are drawing ever closer.

The level of confidence and artistry on display in *Cronos* made it very clear that a major new talent had arrived. At the time, Francis Ford Coppola had just released his visually lush and achingly romantic *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, while Neil Jordan's none-more-elegant adaptation of Anne Rice's *Interview With The Vampire* would be

would say I'm a romantic because I never wink and nudge the audience into telling them, 'Look, I know these things I like are silly, but I'm smarter than the themes.' I'm not. I'm completely getting high on my own supply. I'm promiscuously engorged [laughs] by these fucking stories I tell. And in that, I'm completely romantic. It's heart on sleeve."

That love of the genre means that *Cronos* doesn't simply take its cue from any one film in particular. "*Cronos* responded to literature, it responded to Polidori's vampire, it responded to *Varney The Vampire*, it responded to Richard Matheson, it responded to a huge legacy. It responded to Mario Bava, it responded to Bava's *Black Sabbath* episode, 'The Wurdalak'. It responded to so many things, and yet at the same time it responded to the way that monsters, for me, are real. In my opinion, fantasy and monsters and all of that should be photographed in a way that you would photograph a real actor." ☞

Guillermo del Toro's *Cabinet Of Curiosities*

is out now, published by Titan Books. *Cronos* is available on Blu-ray and DVD via Optimum Home Entertainment.





Guillermo on... Ron Perlman

"If Ron ever kills anyone and he calls me to come with a shovel in the middle of the night, I would show up... It took close to eight years to get *Hellboy* made because I didn't want to cast anyone else, but if Ron had left *Cronos* when his representatives told him to leave *Cronos*, I wouldn't have a career... I always saw Ron Perlman as a star, and it took a while, but I think everybody thinks of him like that now!"

RON PERLMAN

THE DEVIL YOU KNOW

AFTER A LIFETIME
BATTLING HIS
INNER DEMONS,
ACTOR RON
PERLMAN
CHRONICLES
THOSE STRUGGLES
IN A NEW
AUTOBIOGRAPHY
WORDS JOE NAZZARO

RON PERLMAN IS A MAN OF MANY FACES. IN HIS NEW AUTOBIOGRAPHY, *EASY STREET (THE HARD WAY)*, THE ACTOR DESCRIBES SOME OF HIS PREVIOUS ROLES AS

including "A Neanderthal, a lion-faced man, a red-tailed, red-bodied, wise-ass devil, a Romulan, a hunchback, a cross-dresser, a cop, a lawyer, a biker and a hundred other personas."

But those are just the outer faces. While presenting a gruff but affable public persona, Perlman has spent much of his six-decade lifetime dealing with a range of personal conflicts ranging from the untimely death of his father to a series of career lows.

Fortunately for fans of the 'Perl,' as long-time friend and collaborator Guillermo del Toro refers to him, those inner demons now seem to be well and truly locked away. Perlman, who worked with the director on *Cronos*, *Hellboy*, *Hellboy II: The Golden Army*, *Blade II* and *Pacific Rim* – as well as *The Book Of Life*, which del Toro produced – is about to start production on *Hand Of God*, a new drama series from Amazon Studios, in which Perlman plays a corrupt judge who believes that God is leading him down a path of vigilante justice. And if that wasn't enough, the actor is talking seriously about reprising the role of a certain cigar-chomping, red-skinned demon...

When you last spoke to SciFiNow, you were working on the horror-comedy *I Sell The Dead*, just a few weeks after finishing *Hellboy II*. You had your dog on your lap, and your exact words were, 'I'm sick, I'm tired, and I'm sick and tired!' At what point did you change your mind about a third *Hellboy* film?

Well, the good news is I'm no longer sick or tired. The even better news is that I still have the dog here by my side – his name is Nigel, and he travels with me everywhere I go, so he's with me on this book tour right now. And the really good news is whatever whupped my ass – as well as Guillermo's ass and everybody else who worked on *Hellboy II* – is long behind me and forgotten now. The only thing that stands out about the whole experience is that *Hellboy* was always meant to be a trilogy.

We set up a set of circumstances for the fans and for the *Hellboy* faithful who stayed in there for the first two films to find out about this non-negotiable destiny of Hellboy being brought to Earth to destroy the world, and how it was going to play out. Short of actually giving the world that final resolve, I really don't feel that our work

➤ is done. I've discussed this at length with Guillermo, who agrees with me, even though he continues to point out what a heavy lift it would be to get the resources to make it. I said, "Well, tougher things have been done, but when you're doing them for the right reasons, they just become labours of love, so why don't we both use whatever political capital we have and see if we can make this happen?" So I think he's coming around to it as well.

I think Guillermo was worried that I was so adamant about ever putting the make-up on again, because the second movie was really tough. It was tough for both of us, and we walked away from it really, really tired, so I think he was more worried that he didn't want to screw up a great friendship over a movie, but I'm convincing him now and pledging to

This character is someone that has lived in the zeitgeist and actually affected people, so when it had the effect it had on this little kid who was fighting for his life battling leukaemia and using Hellboy as his way of getting through this horrific chemotherapy process, it even opened Guillermo's eyes to, 'Holy shit, maybe this shouldn't be as dismissive as it's been all this time!' I think that's when the conversation began to shift for all of us. It made us realise that we're making movies, so I don't want to make more of it than it is, where we are basically in the entertainment business, but sometimes you're doing a service by doing something that's important to people. If you claim that you love the fans and you live for the fans, you've got to take that into account.

primal and pure way. I just love the process and I seek it out. Everybody in Hollywood knows how much I love to do it, so I get these calls, including from Guillermo every once in a while – who produced *The Book Of Life* – saying, "Hey, I think I've got a juicy one for you!" and sure enough, Xibalba was one of my prouder accomplishments.

You've long since come to terms with your looks, where you talk about "a face that's not ugly, but surely one of its kind," yet when you were doing the TV series *Beauty And The Beast*, there were women who thought Vincent was the sexiest man on Earth. The same to a certain extent applies to Hellboy.

But when you think about it, it took four hours worth of foam rubber being applied to my face to turn me into the sexiest man on Earth, so I'd like to believe that my assessment of my own limitations was pretty accurate. It was just realistic. At that point in my career, I just said, "Okay, I'm going to be the character guy; I'm going to be the guy who is (hopefully) the best friend of the lead – the guy who is getting the girl while I'm the guy who's standing on the side, giving him advice on how to do it or how not to do it." That was fine with me, because the most colourful roles are the roles for the guys who bring all the idiosyncrasies, strangeness and strange behavioural quirks to a project. The leading man is usually kind of flat and one-dimensional, and I've been a leading man on occasion, but that's always been mostly character roles as well, like *Hellboy* or *Beauty And The Beast*, so I've gone way further with this little tool kit of mine than I ever imagined I would, and I've gotten way more out of it than I ever thought.

In your book, you talk about what your dad called 'the Perlman curse,' which is that very few men in your family lived past the age of 50. Also, your former agent Richard Astor told you in your early 20s that you weren't going to get any work until 40, and you wouldn't hit your stride until 50 – which was right around the time the Perlman curse would kick in. He gave me that piece of news when I was 26, and in a more bizarrely paradoxical way. He had invited me into his office to kick around the notion of representing me as an actor and to be my agent. He finished giving me this diagnosis, where he said I really wouldn't start working until I was in my 40s, but I definitely wouldn't start

From Cronos to Kaiju: two decades of Perlman/del Toro team-ups



In 1993, Perlman was sent a script called *The Cronos Device* by an unknown Mexican filmmaker named Guillermo del Toro. After meeting the young director for dinner, he was bowled over by del Toro's boyish joy, enthusiasm and vision. "I was finally in the presence of greatness," Perlman writes in his book, "but this time of a scope I never conceived could exist!"

The now-renamed *Cronos* turned out to be Perlman's first Spanish-language film – a fact that he was unaware of when signing on. "One of the producers was in charge of the contracts for Ron," remembers del Toro, "and I asked him, 'Did you tell Ron the film was in Spanish?' He said, 'No, because I thought it would ruin our chances of getting him!' By then, I knew in American movies, all foreigners speak their language selectively, or in English. You have movies where Nazis are speaking in German, and then talk to Indiana Jones in perfect English with an

accent, so I felt, 'I'll treat this character like that.' I mixed some Spanish dialogue for Ron with some dialogue in English, because this was post-NAFTA Mexico and I felt it was the most natural thing to do."

Cronos marked the beginning of a long and rewarding collaboration between actor and director. This friendship proved to be so strong that when del Toro was casting *Hellboy*, he specifically held out for Perlman even though it meant getting a smaller budget. "For both [original comic-book creator Mike] Mignola and I, the perfect *Hellboy* was always Ron Perlman," claims the director. "It was not a power play or ego trip; I really felt that Ron Perlman was born to play this part."

"Every time I work with Ron, I have the pleasure of seeing him use new tools and get better results and so forth, but with *Hellboy*, his vision for the character was 20-20."

You're currently starring in *The Book Of Life*, in which you play the mischievous god Xibalba. Animation has given you the opportunity to play just about every character imaginable, hasn't it?

I love doing voiceover work. I am a lot of things, but at the end of the day I'm an actor. I love to act, and the purer the experience, the happier I am. There's nothing purer than showing up at a sound stage and giving a performance without a lot of discussion or rehearsal, and just going in, reading the script and saying, "Okay, here's what I've got!" and going for broke on the first take. Animation is the only place you can give that kind of performance.

Very often, you will go back and do it a second, third or fourth time, but you're always going for the gusto, so you're working from an incredibly instinctive colour palette and working in a very

him that I would be so delightful to work with him as *Hellboy* in *Hellboy 3* that he has nothing to worry about!

Did your 2012 Spectral Motion appearance as Hellboy to support the Make-A-Wish Foundation change your mind about the possibility of wearing the head and horns again?

Guillermo was the one who was most surprised when he read about that! We didn't tell anyone it was happening; in fact, it was never meant to be public. It was always just meant to be this thing between us and this kid, but because a couple of people at Spectral took some personal photos and put them on their Facebook page, the thing went viral. That's how Guillermo found out about it after the fact, but it made him understand that this character was bigger than him, me or our contributions to it.



• Top: Perlman in del Toro's debut feature, *Cronos*.
• Above: As kaiju expert Hannibal Chau in *Pacific Rim*.

getting any of the good and juicy stuff until I was in my 50s, but how about if I represent you? I said, "Why the fuck would you want to represent me if you know you can't get me any work?"

He said, "Well, there's always an outside chance, and I'm willing to take that chance!" which I thought was absurd. He did represent me for a few years, but he brought nothing to me, even though he proved himself to be right – although I did get some great roles in my 30s, I really hit my stride maybe at 51 years old. I'm 64 now, so it's been the longest run I've ever had and the most satiating one, and it's been pretty much non-stop. I've done some amazing stuff with Guillermo since then, for example, so the dude knew what he was talking about.

You seem to have beaten the Perlman curse, and you're also getting good work, as your former agent once predicted. Where do you see your career going now?

If you had to pick one reason why I felt like maybe writing this book was a good idea, it's because I have kids who are out of school now and are entering the workforce, and have, curiously enough, chosen a life in the arts that is not dissimilar to my own. I basically felt compelled to say something to them that was of use, and what better thing for me to do then to give them the perspective of this journey that I've taken, which is coming rapidly to a close, but enough of it has transpired so that it has a shape and a form.

It's a life that has truly been blessed, because it's gone way beyond anybody's dreams, even in the potential that I aspired to. Maybe there are things that happened to me along the way and conclusions I came to that will give you clues as to how to make your journey a little bit smoother, and also make you understand how different the circumstances were when I was coming up in the Fifties and Sixties, and then coming up in the 21st Century.

I'm also at this phase in my life where because all of my dreams have come true and then some, everything I do now is about legacy. And pretty much everything I do now, I want to be involved in on a more holistic level, which is why I produced [new TV series] *Hand Of God*, and which is why I'm launching a movie company right now called A Wing And A Prayer Pictures. We're producing ten films, we've got a film fund all raised, and we're now in the process of casting and finding directors for our first four projects. I've looked at

HELLBOY WAS ALWAYS MEANT TO BE A TRILOGY

RON PERLMAN



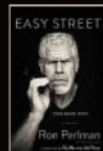
Perlman hasn't ruled out the possibility of a third *Hellboy* outing.



Don't expect his collaborations with del Toro to finish any time soon.

how it's been done for the 40-plus years I've been doing it, and decided that I want to do it my way from here on out.

I think I've learned a couple of things in the business, and I think my heart is in the right place, I think I know how to treat people, and I know why I love working with artists as much as I do. I'm tired of this much reality television and what American culture looks like right now, so I want to make my contribution. I want to go back to beautiful, simple storytelling, and spend the rest of my life doing that!



Easy Street (The Hard Way) by Ron Perlman is available to buy now, published by Da Capo Press.



As Xibalba in the del Toro-produced *The Book Of Life*.



RAY HARRYHAUSEN



STOP LOCO-MOTION

GUILLERMO DEL TORO PAYS TRIBUTE TO RAY HARRYHAUSEN, THE KING OF FANTASTIC BEASTS. SCIFINOW TAKES A LOOK AT HIS SEVEN GREATEST CREATIONS AND WHAT MADE THEM TICK

WORDS POPPY-JAY PALMER

RAY HARRYHAUSEN WAS A PIONEER OF BOTH STOP MOTION AND MONSTER MOVIES. HE WAS THE VISUAL EFFECTS SUPERVISOR OF NUMEROUS FILMS, and invented his own form of stop motion, known as 'Dynamation'. Though he was practically royalty in the world of monster movies, he didn't like to refer to his creations as 'monsters'. He saw them more as huge animals, and imbued personality into each of them.

Harryhausen was something of a hero to del Toro, the latter being an admirer of stop motion and a huge fan of films like the *Sinbad* movies and *Jason And The Argonauts*. We look at how his creations may have inspired our guest editor...



TALOS

Jason And The Argonauts

Greek mythology describes Talos as a giant bronze man who towered over all he met at eight feet tall. In *Jason And The Argonauts*, he's depicted as being almost ten times that to make the giant seem more threatening.



Guillermo on... Harryhausen

"As a kid, I knew stop motion was done with little puppets, but even then when Talos turns his head, kneeling on the plinth in *Jason And The Argonauts*, a shiver went up my spine. That rarely has happened in a movie theatre for me. It was uncanny in an epic way and Harryhausen is a giant... I've been fascinated by him, I had the good fortune of knowing him."





2

MIGHTY JOE YOUNG

Mighty Joe Young

Mighty Joe Young (1949) was the first feature film Harryhausen worked on, and he used King Kong as inspiration for the ape. Joe Young was supposed to be a lot gentler and less frightening than Kong, which is demonstrated in his movement.



3

THE OCTOPUS (IT)

It Came From Beneath The Sea

Most of the terror surrounding the Octopus comes from the movement of its huge, dense tentacles. The model used in the Golden Gate Bridge sequence was barely the size of a human head, but Harryhausen managed to make it look terrifying.



4

MEDUSA

Clash Of The Titans

The gorgon Medusa is one of the most well known and most loved of Harryhausen's creations. As her hair is made of snakes and she has a serpentine tail instead of legs, both ends constantly twist and wriggle, and it's unsettling to watch.



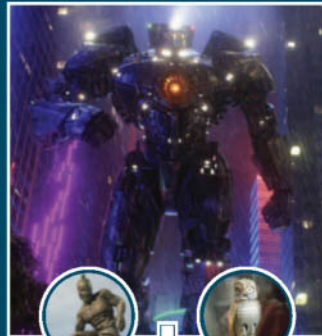
GUILLERMO'S TITANS

WE TAKE A LOOK AT DEL TORO'S RAY-INFLUENCED MONSTERS

JAEGER

Pacific Rim

The mechanical giants' movements copy the movement of their human pilots. For something so huge, a Jaeger walks with a lot of poise.



TALOS



BUBO

MR WINK

Hellboy II: The Golden Army

The troll isn't quite as big as Harryhausen's Cyclops, but his movements are laboured, as if he were 50-foot tall and made of muscle.



CRAB

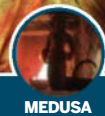


CYCLOPS

THE PALE MAN

Pan's Labyrinth

The Pale Man moves slowly and deliberately, which is reminiscent of Medusa. Both characters are quietly menacing, and their eyes disturbing.



MEDUSA



SKELETONS



5

CYCLOPS

The Seventh Voyage Of Sinbad

The Cyclops walks like a human, but Harryhausen still managed to inject an animalistic element into its movement. Though it's made of modelling clay, it looks dense enough to withstand a nuclear blast.



6

SNAKE DANCER

The Seventh Voyage Of Sinbad

After Medusa, the Snake Dancer was Harryhausen's second attempt at animating a serpentine character. However, the latter's movement is completely different to the former. As she dances, her limbs move with more rhythm and finesse.



7

THE FIGHTING SKELETONS

Jason And The Argonauts

The seven fighting skeletons waging battle with the humans has become one of the most iconic scenes of *Jason And The Argonauts*, and it's easy to see why. The way each bone and joint moves is a master class in stop-motion animation.



Gods and Monsters

CHARTING THE HISTORY OF MARY SHELLEY'S FRANKENSTEIN
ON FILM, ONE EXPERIMENT AT A TIME... WORDS JONATHAN HATFULL

MARY SHELLEY'S FRANKENSTEIN IS ONE OF THE GENRE'S MOST POTENT AND RESONANT STORIES: THE AGE-

old modern fable of man's reach exceeding his grasp with terrifying consequences. Shelley's tale seems made for the movies, so why is it that there are so few examples of *Frankenstein* films that get it right?

Whether it's overplaying the monstrosity of the good Doctor's creation – or that of Frankenstein himself, for that matter – or veering away from the Promethean parallels at the heart of Shelley's novel, even the genuinely great *Frankenstein* films have taken liberties with the source. Perhaps that's why so

many filmmakers keep returning to it. We've had overblown Gothic retellings, we've had several questionable updates, and we've had comedy riffs both good and bad.

But where is that definitive *Frankenstein* film? Why is it so difficult to create an adaptation that is both faithful and brilliant? We look back at the key *Frankenstein* films to examine what worked, what didn't, and what we learned in the process.

26 sci-fi now

Frankenstein (1931)

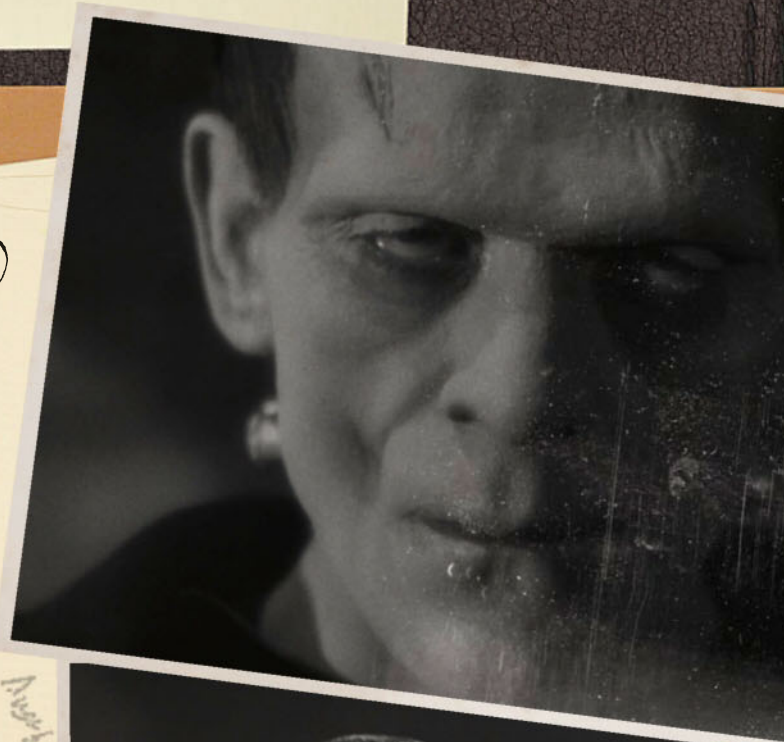
Frankenstein: Colin Clive
The Creature: Boris Karloff
Director: James Whale

The third filmed version of Shelley's tale is a masterfully Gothic piece of work, and delivered the iconic image of Frankenstein's Monster. Although the creature design is certainly different to that described, the tragedy at its centre is faithful, being beautifully brought to life by Boris Karloff. It's an immensely soulful performance as he stalks haltingly, clashing with his creator, often violently. By the time the mob arrives, the sense of tragedy is staggering.

There's brilliant work from Colin Clive as Dr Henry Frankenstein, glorying in the god-like power he wields as he brings life to the dead. However, while the changes to the structure are understandable, the Creature himself is quite altered. With a criminal's brain and the inability to speak, his reflections on society are gone.

Frankenstein's monster!

Ugh! Ugh! Ugh!



Bride Of Frankenstein (1935)

Frankenstein: Colin Clive
The Creature: Boris Karloff
Director: James Whale

After initially resisting making a sequel to the massively successful *Frankenstein*, Whale returned to the character and crafted that rare thing: a follow-up that was better than the original. It was when the script began to focus on the Creature's longing for a mate that Whale found his enthusiasm. The evil Dr Pretorius and the Creature convince Frankenstein to create a bride, and usher in "a new age of gods and monsters."

The film explored the Creature's innate desire for companionship, culminating in one of cinema's finest closing sequences. As he comes face to face with his bride and asks for friendship, she screams in terror. Recognising that he will never have the life he so desperately wants, the Creature tells Frankenstein to leave before he destroys the laboratory with them all. "You go. You live. We belong dead." This understanding that the world will never accept him is immensely powerful.



The Curse Of Frankenstein (1957)

Frankenstein: Peter Cushing
The Creature: Christopher Lee
Director: Terence Fisher

Hammer began their journey into the Universal horror back catalogue with their colour adaptation of Mary Shelley's classic. The film featured what would be established as the studio's A-Team: Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee on screen, Terence Fisher behind the camera and Jimmy Sangster working on the script. Their finest effort would be *Dracula* the following year, but their work on *Frankenstein* is often overlooked.

Rather than rooting the Doctor's desire to advance mankind in any kind of romanticism, Sangster's script reinterpreted the character as a man who would do anything to get what he wanted. This Frankenstein is very much capable of murder, and Cushing oozes genteel menace in the title role. Like Karloff, Lee locates the monster's humanity and his physical presence, but looks chillingly like a recently unearthed corpse.



Guillermo on... Frankenstein

"The more brilliant adaptations in my opinion have been James Whale's *Frankenstein* and *Bride Of Frankenstein*. But they are James Whale's. They have as much to do with the theatricality that follows the novel, rather than the novel itself, which has a Miltonian monster questioning his creator, confronting his creator in a way that is amazing. The monster in Shelley's book is visually very haunting, but not necessarily grotesque. I think what is grotesque is that he is alive. I think that there's still a slant on that myth that could be exciting. I have [making a *Frankenstein* film] on my bucket list."



Frankenstein: The True Story (1973)

Frankenstein: Leonard Whitling
The Creature: Michael Sarrazin
Director: Jack Smight

Something of an oddity, this TV miniseries, written by the great novelist Christopher Isherwood and his partner Don Bachardy, took a lot of liberties with the source material, but created something quite intriguing. The story rifled through several incarnations of the story on film – as well as the source material – to create a messy but beguiling combination.

In an unusual spin, the Creature's appearance deteriorates throughout the story. The handsome Creature quickly degenerates and becomes the hideous creature of previous adaptations. There is the sense that this Frankenstein truly does love his creation before he fails him. There is a profound guilt that haunts the Doctor, which had only really been seen in *Bride*.

Mary Shelley's Frankenstein (1994)

Frankenstein: Kenneth Branagh
The Creature: Robert De Niro
Director: Kenneth Branagh

Following the success of the Francis Ford Coppola-directed *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, Gothic monsters were suddenly in vogue once more, with Coppola producing this handsome mess. Directed by and starring Kenneth Branagh in the title role, the script stuck more closely to Shelley's book than several previous incarnations, but somehow fell short.

Both overblown and stage-y, Branagh's *Frankenstein* often feels like an ego trip for the director. His performance as a tragic, driven and mostly shirtless romantic is so bombastic that it blows Robert De Niro's muted turn as the Creature off the screen. There are moments where the film achieves the resonance it works so hard for, however: Helena Bonham Carter's transformation is well handled, and Tom Hulce gives an excellent performance as Frankenstein's friend Henry Clerval. Branagh glories in the romantic possibilities of the Gothic, but turns everything up to 11 with a muted end result.

Stillness
 fascinating
 overblown

Buch of
 blood

rejection of nature

Complex Peter



UNIVERSAL MONSTERS

THE A-Z OF UNIVERSAL MONSTERS

LEARN YOUR BELA FROM YOUR BORIS AND YOUR WOLF MAN FROM YOUR DRACULA'S DAUGHTERS WITH THIS HANDY GUIDE

WORDS JONATHAN HATFULL

A IS FOR ABBOTT AND COSTELLO

The comedy duo of Bud Abbott and Lou Costello spearheaded a long-running series of comedies starring Universal's monsters that helped to revive audience interest, although the stars weren't necessarily convinced of their quality.

KEY FILMS: ABBOT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN (1948), ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET THE INVISIBLE MAN (1951)



B IS FOR BELA LUGOSI

The Hungarian-American actor took the role of Dracula from the stage to the screen and delivered the defining performance. The price of his fame was typecasting, as he became one of Universal's go-to villains. Having turned down the role of Frankenstein's Monster, he would find himself working regularly alongside Boris Karloff as he fought to break free of the horror genre. Despite his eventual career decline, Lugosi remains one of cinema's most iconic figures.

KEY FILMS: DRACULA (1931), MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUE (1932), THE BLACK CAT (1934), THE RAVEN (1935), THE WOLF MAN (1941)



C IS FOR LON CHANEY AND LON CHANEY JR

The Chaney family played a key role in Universal's horror history. Lon Chaney Sr, the 'Man of a Thousand Faces', stunned with his roles in the silent era, creating his own prosthetic make-up to stunning effect. His son began acting in



movies after his father's death, delivering an iconic performance in *The Wolf Man* – a role that would define his career.

KEY FILMS: THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME (1923), THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA (1925), THE WOLF MAN (LON CHANEY JR, 1941)

D IS FOR DRACULA'S DAUGHTER

Of all the *Dracula* sequels, this is arguably the finest, and certainly the most elegant, with a stunning turn from Gloria Holden. With clear lesbian overtones, the film has since been cited by authors like Anne Rice as a huge inspiration.

DIRECTOR: LAMBERT HILLIER

RELEASED: 1936

E IS FOR ELSA LANCHESTER

Despite the fact that the character only appears on screen in the closing minutes of the film, Lanchester's performance as the titular Bride of Frankenstein is one of the most affecting moments of James Whale's superior sequel. Her wordless turn is both affecting and uncanny, as this distinctly monstrous creation attempts to understand the world she is being confronted with, before reacting



SA
LANCSTER
E

**Guillermo on...
Universal Monsters**

"Creature From The Black Lagoon, Son Of Frankenstein, the classic Werewolf OoF London, The Invisible Man, which is a brilliant, brilliant deranged black comedy by [James] Whale... you name it. I love Universal; this is my childhood. On the weekends when I was a kid, I was watching Universal Monsters on Sunday TV. Sunday was about two things that meant the same to me: church and monster movies. They were both religious experiences for me. Black and white has a power in horror that is very different than colour. When people talk about image being one thing and content being another, for me that's unfathomable, because I can't imagine the Universal monster movies living in colour, and I cannot imagine Hammer in black and white."

COVER FEATURE

Universal Monsters

violently against it. Her scream, her hiss, and her look would inspire so many.

KEY FILMS: THE BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN (1935),

F IS FOR KARL FREUND

The cinematographer of *Metropolis* worked on *Dracula*, where he took many of the directing duties from Tod Browning. He would go on to direct *The Mummy*, in the process helping to launch Karloff as a megastar.

KEY FILMS: DRACULA (1931), THE MUMMY (1932), MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUE (1932)

G IS FOR GILL MAN

The creature of *Creature Of The Black Lagoon* is one of Universal's most intriguing creations: unsettling but sympathetic, otherworldly but almost human. The film comes very late in the cycle of Universal's monster movies, but it is very much a highlight.

DIRECTOR: JACK ARNOLD

RELEASED: 1954

H IS FOR HOUSE OF...

As audiences started to tire of the Universal monsters, the studio began to package them together in an attempt to provide spectacle. *The House Of Frankenstein* in 1944 and *The House Of Dracula* in 1945 offered your favourite monsters "All together!"

KEY FILMS: HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN (1944), HOUSE OF DRACULA (1945)

I IS FOR THE INVISIBLE MAN

James Whale's take on HG Wells' classic remains one of the studio's finest achievements. A dark, violent and darkly comic ghoulish tale with a superb performance from Claude Rains as the titular character, the film was a huge success both critically and commercially.

DIRECTOR: JAMES WHALE

RELEASED: 1933



J IS FOR JAMES WHALE

Few filmmakers cast such a long shadow over the horror genre as Whale. With *Frankenstein*, *The Bride Of Frankenstein* and *The Invisible Man*, Whale gave Universal three of its very best. He defined the look, mood and challenging nature of the studio's finest horrors, and his work remains every bit as beautiful as the decades pass. His personal troubles would see his career decline before retiring from filmmaking.

KEY FILMS: FRANKENSTEIN (1931), THE INVISIBLE MAN (1933), THE BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN (1935)



K IS FOR BORIS KARLOFF

Given that his defining performance was credited to a question mark, the tremendous rise of Boris Karloff is truly stunning. His soulful work as *Frankenstein's Monster* located the man under the make-up and made the character so much more than a collection of nuts, bolts and broken flesh. Karloff's career would blaze into life, becoming one of Universal's most bankable stars before he left to pursue his career elsewhere.

KEY FILMS: FRANKENSTEIN (1931), THE MUMMY (1932), THE OLD DARK HOUSE (1932), THE BLACK CAT (1934), THE RAVEN (1935), THE BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN (1935)



L IS FOR CARL LAEMMLE AND CARL LAEMMLE JR

Universal's commitment to horror came from this father-son studio head duo. Following Laemmle Sr's success with *Hunchback* and *Phantom Of The Opera*, Laemmle Jr reaped tremendous rewards with *Dracula* through to *Bride Of Frankenstein*. However, he was overspending on expensive flops, which led to him being bought out.

TENURE: 1920-29, 1929-36

M IS FOR THE MUMMY

Boris Karloff brought the classic monster Imhotep to glorious life in Karl Freund's 1932 box-office smash. Promoted as *Karloff The Uncanny* (admittedly a step up from a question mark), this towering performance would be the most taxing for him, as the make-up took an entire day to apply.

DIRECTOR: KARL FREUND

RELEASED: 1932

N IS FOR NO CODE

The rising tide of violence and sexuality in movies led to the creation of the Motion Pictures Production Code in 1930, but it was rarely enforced in any meaningful way until 1934. It's incredible to see what these films got away with when viewed today.



O IS FOR THE OLD DARK HOUSE
Another big hit for Whale and Karloff, this classic blends comedy and horror as five travellers make the mistake of staying at the family estate of Horace Femm and his mute boozy butler (Karloff).

DIRECTOR: JAMES WHALE
RELEASED: 1932

P IS FOR JACK PIERCE
The man behind the make-up, Jack Pierce is responsible for the iconic looks of *The Man Who Laughs*, *Dracula*, *The Mummy* and *The Wolf Man*. An inspiration for everyone from Rob Bottin to Rick Baker, Pierce's designs truly defined these movie monsters.

KEY FILMS: DRACULA (1931), FRANKENSTEIN (1931), THE MUMMY (1932), THE INVISIBLE MAN (1933), THE BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN (1935)



Q IS FOR QUASIMODO
Lon Chaney's performance in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* would drive the film to tremendous box-office success, and provided the catalyst for the studio's interest in horror.

DIRECTOR: WALLACE WORSLEY
RELEASED: 1923



R IS FOR THE RAVEN
Karloff and Lugosi teamed up for this extremely dark take on Edgar Allan Poe's classic tale, which flopped disastrously at the time, but has since garnered the reputation it deserves.

DIRECTOR: LEW LANDERS
RELEASED: 1935

S IS FOR GLENN STRANGE
When Karloff no longer wanted to play Frankenstein's Monster, the six-foot-five Glenn Strange was spotted by make-up artist Jack Pierce to take the role. Coached by Karloff himself, Strange's appearance in the make up would become so strongly linked to the character that his picture was mistakenly printed with Boris Karloff's obituary in the *New York Times*.

KEY FILMS: HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN (1944), HOUSE OF DRACULA (1945), ABOUT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN (1948)

T IS FOR LARRY TALBOT
The hirsute hero of George Wagner's classic is beautifully brought to life by Lon Chaney Jr, who created what arguably remains the definitive portrayal of the tragic werewolf.

DIRECTOR: GEORGE WAGNER
RELEASED: 1941

U IS FOR UNIVERSAL
Perhaps more than any other studio, Universal established themselves and their monster movies as a brand. With a relaunch of their back catalogue currently underway, the power of this legacy is very much still in evidence.

V IS FOR CONRAD VEIDT
The star of *The Cabinet Of Dr Caligari* would never be a true part of the Universal horror stable of stars, but he created one of their most iconic human monsters as the deformed Gwynplaine in *The Man Who Laughs*, providing inspiration for *Batman's* Joker.

KEY FILMS: THE MAN WHO LAUGHS (1928)



W IS FOR WEREWOLF OF LONDON
Pre-dating *The Wolf Man* by six years, *Werewolf Of London* starred Henry Hull as a botanist bitten by a werewolf in Tibet who brings the curse back home with him, and is arguably just as influential.

DIRECTOR: STUART WALKER
RELEASED: 1935



X IS FOR RADIUM X
Karloff and Lugosi came together once again for *The Invisible Ray*, a hugely entertaining sci-fi horror in which Karloff's scientist is infected by Radium X and becomes radioactive.

DIRECTOR: LAMBERT HILLIER
RELEASED: 1936

Y IS FOR YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN
Not strictly a Universal horror, but Mel Brooks' spoof is a loving tribute to James Whale's classics, and remains essential viewing for any monster movie fan.

DIRECTOR: MEL BROOKS
RELEASED: 1974



Z IS FOR ZOMBIES
If you're looking for zombies in your classic Universal monster movies, you're going to be disappointed. The closest you'll get is 1932's *White Zombie*, starring Bela Lugosi, which was filmed on Universal's lot but ultimately distributed by United Artists.





MAD MAX 2: THE ROAD WARRIOR

HOW TO MAKE A CULT HIT

MAD MAX 2: THE ROAD WARRIOR HAS STOOD THE TEST OF TIME WITH THE ROBUSTNESS OF A TANKER TRUCK. SCIFINOW LOOKS AT THE FORMULA FOR WHAT MADE IT A HUMUNGUS HIT...

WORDS POPPY-JAY PALMER



**Guillermo on...
Mad Max 2**

"There were golden years in the Eighties in which basically within a few hours or a few days you were able to see *The Thing*, *Blade Runner* or *The Road Warrior*, which all were formative experiences for me. To this day, it was earth shattering. I remember vividly I was in Las Vegas, and on one weekend I saw *The Road Warrior*, and my head exploded. I came out of the theatre and stupidly lay down on the pavement to have an eye-level shot of the pavement with the grains of the pavement and the two lanes, you know, and I remember my eyes were never the same. It was like dropping mushrooms. I came out, and everything looked different. The way I looked at the world couldn't be the same."

MAD MAX 2: THE ROAD WARRIOR

How To Become A Cult Hit

WHEN MAD MAX 2: THE ROAD WARRIOR WAS RELEASED IN 1981, MEL GIBSON WAS RELATIVELY UNKNOWN, AND THE FILM HAD TO BE MARKETING simply by its subtitle, *The Road Warrior*, since hardly anyone had seen the original *Mad Max*. Since then, it has become a mainstay of many a person's DVD collection, and inspired countless post-apocalyptic movies, TV shows, songs, videogames and fancy dress costumes alike. Weird, bleak and ultra-violent, *Mad Max* sits comfortably under the heading of 'cult classic'.

1 HAVE AN INTERESTING (AND TROUBLED) PRODUCTION. *Mad Max*'s production team seemed to have a complete lack of regard for health and safety regulations, which often resulted in its actors/stunt people facing peril. The stunt driver for the tanker roll sequence at the end of the film wasn't allowed to eat anything before shooting the stunt in case he needed to be rushed to surgery. A stunt involving a motorcycle rider crashing into a car and flying over the top of it was an accident; the accident could have been fatal, but the stunt driver managed to get away with a broken leg. The footage of the crash looked so dramatic that it was used in the film anyway.



2 HAVE A MEMORABLE ANTIHERO. Mel Gibson had relatively few lines, but Max Rockatansky has still become something of an icon. His silent but threatening demeanour is a staple for any overly dramatic action film antihero. His speech and intense, moody stares practically scream, 'I don't have time for this shit, but I will make time to end you.' His appearance is also something special, from his sawed-down shotgun and utility belt to his one-armed jacket and metal leg brace. Full leathers in the outhack reflect just how tortured he is.

3 INFLUENCE POPULAR CULTURE. The list of how *Mad Max 2* inspired other projects isn't endless, but it's pretty damn big. Evidence: the videogame *Borderlands* was heavily influenced on the film's art direction; hot-shot directors Guillermo del Toro, David Fincher and Robert Rodriguez have all cited the film as one of their favourites; WWE wrestler Chris Jericho refers to himself as the 'Ayatollah of Rock-n-rolla', and Duran Duran based the videos for a couple of their singles on the film. Even *Rugrats* has parodied it in a scene featuring Chuckie Finster dressed as the Gyro Captain piloting the gyrocopter.

4 STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD. Be weird. Be unusual. Get your audience whispering 'What the hell?' *Max Mad* succeeds in this in almost every way. The costume designers raided second-hand shops, junk shops, sporting outlets and even S&M shops to create the stylised look of the marauders, which included leather, studs, shoulder pads and seatless trousers. The characters are weird, ranging from the Feral Kid, a tiny, fly-away-haired boy who communicates through grunts to the Humungus, a huge, articulate man dressed in a metal mask and a codpiece. The combination of Eighties camp and gritty ultra-violence is frankly alarming, but it works.

5 GARNER A DEDICATED FANBASE AND NEVER DIE. Though *Mad Max 2* was a low-profile Ozploitation film, it grossed \$2.5 million on its opening weekend in 1981, and has punched the test of time in the face. It managed to gather quite a following – one that finished with a kick to the groin. Its fanbase is still going strong, and there's still enough enthusiasm to warrant the remake starring big names like Tom Hardy, Charlize Theron and Nicholas Hoult, due for release next year.



HARRISON FORD IS

BLADE RUNNER

CERT

JERRY PERENCHIO AND BOB YORKIN PRESENT
A MICHAEL DEELEY-RIDLEY SCOTT PRODUCTION STARRING HARRISON FORD WITH RUTGER HAUER SEAN YOUNG EDWARD JAMES OLMOs WILLIAM SANDERSON AND JOANNA CASSIDY
SCREENPLAY BY HAMPTON FANCHER AND DAVID PEOPLES EXECUTIVE PRODUCER BRIAN KELLY AND HAMPTON FANCHER VISUAL EFFECTS BY DOUGLAS TRUMBULL ORIGINAL MUSIC COMPOSED BY VANGELIS
ASSOCIATE PRODUCER IVOR POWELL PRODUCED BY MICHAEL DEELEY DIRECTED BY RIDLEY SCOTT

BLADE RUNNER

LEARNING FROM THE BEST

WHAT DEL TORO LEARNED FROM ONE OF THE MOST REMARKABLE FILMS OF ALL TIME

WORDS STEVE WRIGHT



- Above: The grimy LA of *Blade Runner* stands out against the shiny sci-fi structures of old.
- Left: Its inspiration for the Hong Kong depicted in *Pacific Rim* is clear to see.

EVERYONE REMEMBERS WHERE THEY WERE WHEN THEY FIRST SAW *BLADE RUNNER*. ONE OF THE TRUE MASTERWORKS OF SCI-FI ON FILM, AT ITS MOST EFFECTIVE IT HAS THE capacity to etch itself into the human psyche, its myriad meanings providing much to puzzle over long after it's over.

It's a film with many fans, one of which is Guillermo del Toro. He numbers Ridley Scott's 1982 noir-tinged adaptation of Philip K Dick's *Do Androids Dream Of Electric Sheep?* among his favourite films. Cast your eye over del Toro's own back catalogue, and the lessons he has heeded from one of sci-fi's true masterworks are clear to see.

With this in mind, we take a look at the similarities between *Blade Runner* and del Toro's own cinematic output...

1 MUSINGS ON THE NATURE OF HUMANITY
Blade Runner's Replicants could be the most sympathetic foes we've ever been asked to rail against. After first being forced into slavery, they are subsequently hunted down and killed. Their crime? Wanting to be human.

Roy Batty is arguably the most problematic of the group, but he still saves the life of Deckard – who had previously murdered his friends – proving he has the humanity the supposed human lacks.

AT ITS MOST EFFECTIVE, *BLADE RUNNER* HAS THE CAPACITY TO ETCH ITSELF INTO THE HUMAN PSYCHE

Del Toro's works are full of such figures: behind *Hellboy*'s terrifying exterior, he is as average-Joe as it's possible to be. Similarly, Jesus Gris fights his newly granted vampiric nature for as long as he can in *Cronos*. In fact, the true nature of monstrosity in del Toro's work is often portrayed in human form. Think *Pan's Labyrinth*'s sadistic Captain Vidal and the corrupted vampires of *Blade II*.

2 THE FLAWED HERO
Sometimes, Deckard came across more as the bad guy than those he was hunting. He approaches the whole mission with an air of nonchalance – even when he's hanging for dear life from the rooftops, it's hard not to shake the feeling that he's somehow had it coming.

In del Toro's own work the nature of the heroes are similarly ambiguous. Indeed, in any other film, *Blade* and ➤



COVER FEATURE

Blade Runner



Guillermo on... *Blade Runner*

"Once you have tasted caviar you always have that paragon, you have that watermark, and *Blade Runner*, man, it took every lesson that you could learn from science fiction... it's beyond the genre. Because *Blade Runner* is a poem to film. And anyone that says any less, I would have to wholeheartedly disagree."

樂林涵





• Clockwise from top left: Aesthetically, much of del Toro's work owes a lot to *Blade Runner*; Roy Batty is arguably the most human character in the film; Every corner of *Blade Runner*'s world feels authentically lived in; Del Toro described it as a "poem to film", and with shots like this you can see why; the nature of humanity has been pondered over in a number of del Toro's own works.

Hellboy may very well have been the monsters, being vampire and demon respectively. *Pacific Rim*'s Raleigh Becket has turned his back on the fight for humanity, while *Cronos*, *The Devil's Backbone*, *Mimic* and *Pan's Labyrinth* are devoid of anyone who can be truly described as heroes; just people trying to survive the horrible circumstances they have found themselves in.

Ultimately, *Blade Runner*'s greyest of grey moral shades – where no one is truly good or bad – lends itself to del Toro's work. His most straightforwardly unambiguous good-versus-evil tale to date is *Pacific Rim*, and even that, to paraphrase the tagline, involves creating monsters to fight monsters.

3 DREAMS VERSUS REALITY

To this day, *Blade Runner* revels in throwing viewers' perceptions up in the air. Is Deckard a Replicant? If so, is everything he's told by his paymasters a lie? Does the origami unicorn mean what we think it means? What about Roy – did he really see attack ships on fire off the shoulder of Orion? It's a subtle yet ingenious method of misdirection that has yet to be bettered by anyone else.

Of all del Toro's films, it is *Pan's Labyrinth* that is most indebted to *Blade Runner* in this regard. Young Ofelia is distracted from the reality of her existence by Doug Jones' Faun – but is it a fantasy all along? The climatic sequence in the titular labyrinth leaves this open, suggesting that the fantasy could well be one of her own creation.

In much the same way as *Blade Runner*, the inability of *Pan's Labyrinth* to fully reconcile its more existential elements with its physical world will always leave it open to interpretation.

4 DYSTOPIC SETTING

One of *Blade Runner*'s biggest strengths is its sense of place – it looks and feels lived in, not like the shiny space-city vistas of countless pulp science fiction covers. The world of *Blade Runner* is one of perpetual rain and grime, flooded with neon adverts offering an escape. This lack of warmth rubs off on the rest of the film – which we cannot state with any kind of finality contains any human characters.

Looks-wise, the Hong Kong of *Pacific Rim* shares similarities with the LA of *Blade Runner*. Numbering in its layout various shanty structures that have sprung up around the remains of a fallen kaiju, like *Blade Runner* you only feel like you are getting part of the story that this environment tells. The troll market of *Hellboy II: The Golden Army* has a similarly rich design ethic; *Mimic* heads underground to give del Toro's only true horror movie the desolate location it needs, and it would be wrong to discount the less overtly monstrous environments of *The Devil's Backbone* and *Pan's Labyrinth*.

In setting, the only real difference is that while *Blade Runner*'s oppressive environments eschewed warmth at all costs, del Toro can't resist filling his worlds with larger-than-life characters. Thus, much of del Toro's work carries an undercurrent of hope; something the avowedly pessimistic *Blade Runner* seemed unwilling to provide.

5 AHEAD OF ITS TIME?

The less than appreciative critical reception that *Blade Runner* received at the time of its release is well documented. It didn't help that Ridley Scott wasn't totally satisfied by the final product, with a number of changes being forced on him. It was only through subsequent re-releases in the form of the Director's Cut in 1991 and Final Cut in 2007 that he had a film he was happy with.

For the most part, the receptions to del Toro's films have largely been positive ones. *The Devil's Backbone* and *Cronos* were critically acclaimed, and *Blade II*, *Hellboy* and *Hellboy II* gained applause at a time when the public appetite for superhero films was waning. However, he's had his dark moments: his negative experiences on *Mimic* are well documented, and it was only with the release of his own director's cut that he gained a film to be proud of. Moreover, *Pacific Rim* unfairly gained the reputation of being a box-office bomb after only grossing \$100 million in the US, but its \$400 million worldwide takings should ensure its rich potential spills over into sequels.

Since its inception, *Blade Runner*'s renown has grown and grown, now being recognised for the masterpiece it is. In turn, del Toro's success has increased interest in his earlier works. One day, perhaps he'll make his *Blade Runner* – maybe he already has! ✦





•STEPHEN KING•

WELCOME TO THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

HOWDY, NEIGHBOUR! WHETHER YOU'RE NEW TO THE AREA OR JUST WANTING THE LATEST GOSSIP ON WHAT'S BEEN GOING ON AROUND TOWN, WE'VE GOT ALL THE LOCAL NEWS THAT'S FIT TO PRINT. AFTER ALL, IT'S A SMALL TOWN, SON, AND WE ALL SUPPORT THE TEAM...

CHILD KILLER HENRY BOWERS ARRESTED



Reporting: Gordie LaChance

We can all rest a little easier, as the Sheriff has informed us that youth gang leader Henry Bowers has been arrested. We've long considered Bowers to be a menace to the peace and quiet of our community, but we never would have guessed that he would be responsible for the shocking murders that started with the death of poor Georgie Denbrough.

While details of the circumstances surrounding Bowers' arrest are being kept under wraps by the Sheriff's department, we've been told that his gang chased a group of children into the sewers under the town, and that said group included Georgie's brother Bill, as well as Benjamin Hanscom, Beverly Marsh, Richard Tozier, Edward Kaspbrak, Stanley Uris and Michael Hanlon.

Mrs Kaspbrak informed us that Bowers had been tormenting her son and his friends for some time. Mr and Mrs Denbrough told us that they were relieved that the monster responsible for their son's death had finally been caught, but declined to comment

further. Young Richie Tozier began to tell us something about not understanding what we were talking about, but Eddie told him "Beep beep, Richie." We understand that this is a private joke between the two boys.

The full extent of Bowers' crimes is still coming to light. Police now believe that the missing Patrick Hockstetter was almost certainly killed by Bowers, and that the young monster also murdered his own father.

Over the course of the last few months, we have seen some increasingly outrageous rumours come to light concerning the nature of the killer. Some local children have come to us, and to the police, claiming that an evil clown was the one behind the killings – a terrifying creature that feeds on children. However, any attempts by these kids to show proof that they were convinced existed came to nothing. "Bev came in screaming about blood in the sink one time," Mr Marsh told us. "I couldn't see anything. She just wants attention, that one" [Editor's note: Mr Marsh's testimony should be taken with a grain of salt. There

ISSUE #1
14/08

EDITOR: JULIA SHUMWAY
NEWS EDITOR: BEN MEARS
PICTURE EDITOR: RICHARD DEES



WELCOME TO THE CREED FAMILY

We're thrilled to welcome the newest members of our community: the Creeds. Louis will be taking the position of the director of the University's health service, where he'll be patching up our students (congratulations to Track gold medal winner Victor Pascow!) He's joined by his lovely wife Rachel, his daughter Ellie and their young son Gage. When we greeted the Creeds, the precocious Ellie insisted that we include their cat Church in our newsletter, although we can't say he seemed too pleased to see us! If you want to say hi to the Creeds, just pop up to the house opposite Jud Crandall's place, behind the old Pet Sematary. Old Jud asked us to be careful crossing the road and muttered something about dead being better...



are those of us who think that he should spend less time in bars and more time treating his daughter better].

Events as shocking as this come around once in a lifetime, and we thank God that this evil boy has been apprehended. Life can finally return to normal.



★ FOR SALE ★

Red and white 1958
Plymouth Fury

The car is a wreck, but the parts still have life in 'em. The police have been over it with a fine-tooth comb. For information, contact Arnie Cunningham.

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★ GRAND OPENING ★

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HAVE YOU SEEN RALPHIE AND DANNY GLICK?

The police have confirmed that Marjorie Glick's two boys have gone missing. If anyone has any information, please contact the authorities immediately. We're told that they were last seen walking home with their friend Mark Petrie, but Mark arrived home some time before the boys were reported lost. It's at times like this that we need to pull together as a community and look out for one another. This is a good, honest town, and we firmly believe that if we pull together, we will get through this. Richard Straker, who has bought the old Marsten house with Kurt Barlow, pledged their support to the search effort (Mr Barlow was detained elsewhere).

THOMAS EWEN CONSOLIDATED HIGH SCHOOL CONGRATULATES SENIORS ON GRADUATION

Well, we've made it to the end of another year, and you know what that means: Prom! Despite the recent ugliness surrounding Chris Hargensen and the awful treatment of that fragile White girl, Principal Morton and Miss Desjardin assure us that the event will go off without a hitch. The troublemakers are being kept away, and everything is set for a magical night for our students. On a heartwarming note, a little birdie tells us that Carrie will be coming out of her shell to make an appearance. Who knows, maybe she'll even make Homecoming Queen!

NB. Margaret White was unavailable for comment



BOOK CLUB: PAUL SHELDON IN CONVERSATION WITH THAD BEAUMONT

We're thrilled to announce that this month's book club event will see our own local master, Mr Thad Beaumont, in conversation with the great Paul Sheldon. The topic of conversation will be "Saying goodbye to beloved characters," as Thad recently stopped writing his controversial thrillers under his pen-name George Stark, while Paul has said goodbye to his heroine Misery Chastain to pursue a career in thrillers. Paul's self-described 'number one fan' Annie Wilkes has volunteered to provide refreshments, and we'd advise you not to get in her way!



CARETAKER WANTED: OVERLOOK HOTEL

Words: Mike Noonan

The world-famous Overlook Hotel is hiring. Stuart Ullman has asked us to spread the word that a new caretaker is wanted for the off-season. It's a fantastic opportunity for a family, of course, as you'll have your accommodation, food and bills taken care of for the duration of your employment, and in these hard times that's not the kind of thing to turn your nose up at.

Mr Ullman does stress that single men or women should not apply, as the winters can be cruel, and the cabin fever of spending so much time alone can prove to be too much to handle. Before the snow comes, you will

be asked to clean the gutters and tend to the incredible topiary, and afterwards you'll need to keep an eye on the boiler ("It creeps," says summer caretaker Watson). There's also a fully stocked kitchen that award-winning chef Dick Hallorann will be more than happy to show you.

The Overlook has had a rich and glamorous history. If you were lucky enough to be a guest in the Forties you would have been rubbing shoulders with movie stars and mobsters. With that, of course, come the ghost stories and supernatural rumours, and that's all part of the place's charm. What's a hotel without a good ghost story?

Mr Ullman will not be taking questions about Delbert Grady and his family.

GUILLERMO ON... STEPHEN KING

"Stephen King inherits the mantle of writers like Richard Matheson, who told us horror can be not in an abandoned abbey in the north of England, but could actually live in a duplex house two doors from you. He says, 'Let me tell you a really powerful horror story... in high school.' Not in an exploitative, B-movie, *I Was A Teenage Werewolf* kind of way, but in a way that makes it plausible for you to know someone like Carrie White, or to think you know that if you are not careful, at night you could see Danny Glick floating outside your window, gently tapping at the glass in your middle-class suburban home."



EDGAR ALLAN POE

COMMUNING WITH THE SPIRITS

RICHARD CORBEN ON THE GRANDFATHER OF AMERICAN GOTHIC

WORDS JOE NAZZARO

THERE ARE FEW ARTISTS WHOSE WORK IS INSTANTLY RECOGNISABLE EVEN WHEN WORKING IN A VARIETY OF WILDLY DIFFERENT STYLES, BUT RICHARD

Corben has to be at the top of that list. Whether it's his intricate black-and-white line work, lush painted colour, or the hugely muscled heroes and well-endowed women, a Corben piece is always unique. As our guest editor for this issue, Guillermo del Toro, once declared, "He is the mainstay in my collection of original art, and one of the most precise and admirable storytellers in the medium."

That feeling, according to a recent conversation with the artist, is mutual. "I greatly admire the work and talent of Guillermo," he declares, "and if memory serves we well, we talked about the possibility of me doing some designs for one of his movies, but it didn't work out. I think doing drawings for film production is a specialised skill; one that I haven't cultivated."

It's his incredible diversity of style that has kept Corben a powerful voice for more than five decades, from the fanzine days of the Sixties through to his *Warren* magazine work of the Seventies, and the current fine art, book covers and comic-book illustrations of recent years.

Dark Horse has just collected Corben's recent Poe work in *Spirits Of The Dead*, a deluxe hardcover featuring more than a dozen stories and poems. "I started drawing the stories over three years ago, and the planning began many years before that," says Corben. "It came out in bits and pieces mainly to get some exposure while the work was being done. Production, colouring and promotion is kind of a big deal on a product of this size; it's not like the old

days of black and white underground comix, when a single cartoonist could conceive a comic and produce it all himself – well, maybe it could still be done, but you'd have to have some other income to live on while the production continued. I like the way the book came out."

As the artist recalls, he got hooked on Poe back during his college days. "That interest was stimulated even more by the Roger Corman/Richard Matheson movie adaptations of the Sixties; it was these free versions of the stories that showed me how far from the original material one could reach. Basically, Poe dealt with deep personal feelings of love and loss and despair; those happy emotions that really rang true to me."

"When I tried to adapt the stories myself, I found out just how hard it was to faithfully translate those feelings into a different medium; in fact, I'm not sure a truly 'faithful' adaptation can be done, at least by me. But a less than perfect adaptation does have merits, because it allows for the exploration of ideas inspired by Poe's originals."

"My plan was to include obscure stories and poems, as well as those done a million times before. Doing the poems was especially enjoyable. I got inspiration not just from the overall scenario, but also from single words and phrases that set the juices flowing."

Corben also had a bit of fun with his adaptations, introducing the story device of a horror host. "I thought a horror host would be an element of

familiarity in a collection of widely different and diverse stories where each story starts from zero," he concedes. "A host character can get the narrative going smoothly. And yes, I am obviously influenced by the great horror comics of the past. I missed the chance to work on books like *Tales From The Crypt* in the Fifties, so I made my own opportunity by putting in 'Mag the Hag.' I think it works, and I hope the readers agree."

"I'm glad the book has a dense, fully packed finish to it, so the reader can feel they are getting their money's worth. Maybe it's a little too dense, but it is a high point in my career, and I'm more than happy that I got to do this collection. It was a lot of hard work, but I loved every minute of it. As I said, I could have kept going for a few more stories, but maybe that's the time to stop: when you're hungry for more."

Looking to the future, there is no shortage of projects that Corben wants to take on. "I will probably never stray far from my horror comics roots," he claims. "One of my dream projects is an anthology of short horror stories, but another possibility would be a return to my fantasy character, Den, who appeared in *Heavy Metal* during the Nineties. Little teasers for those ideas will probably first show up on my web page. My study and training in painting and illustration support my work in comic-books, which is okay with me, because I still feel I have a lot that I want to do in comics!"



Edgar Allan Poe's Spirits Of The Dead by Richard Corben is available to buy in hardback now, published by Dark Horse.

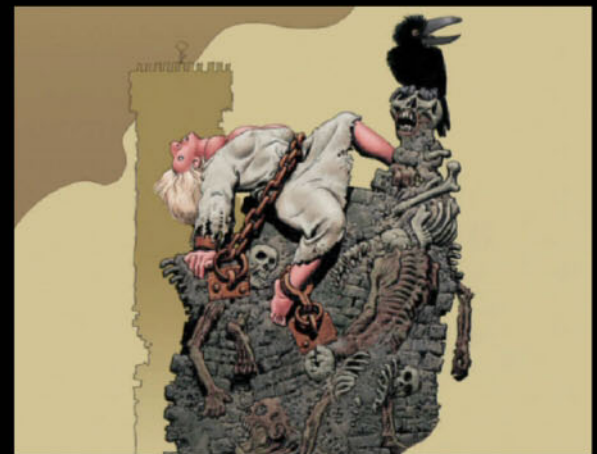


EDGAR ALLAN POE

Communing With The Spirits

Guillermo on... *Edgar Allan Poe*

"Poe was the first guy to take the more Gothic narrative that tells you there is a haunted castle or there is a haunted place, and he basically enunciates through his work that the most haunted place is the human mind. He's perhaps one of the first authors to fully and shamelessly explore aberrant psychology."





GHOULISH

Illustration by Gary Pullin

The Master Of Madness

WHY HOLLYWOOD IS STILL SCARED OF ONE OF THE MOST
IMPORTANT HORROR WRITERS OF ALL TIME

WORDS JONATHAN HATFULL

DEAD CTHULHU MAY WAIT DREAMING IN HIS HOUSE AT R'LYEH, BUT FEW FIGURES HAVE CAST SUCH A LENGTHY AND INSIDIOUS SHADOW OVER THE HORROR GENRE AS that nightmarish god's creator: Howard Phillips Lovecraft. Since his death in 1937, the author's work has only grown in stature, creating a myth every bit as inspiring as those in his fiction.

From the frozen Antarctic wastes to Miskatonic University, from family estates packed with secrets to haunted student lodgings, Lovecraft's work has inspired and informed generations of genre writers with his uncanny ability to conjure a sense of dread, doom and otherworldly menace. His stories drew on the Gothic tradition, but were told in a voice that was truly unique. There's a reason why we see his influence so frequently in films, TV, novels and comics, and that's because there really isn't anything else like it. His writing is so undeniably important that he has become that rare thing: an author whose hateful views on race have been segregated from his work. His personal life

is one thing, and his work as an author is quite another, having been admired, embraced and imitated.

Screenwriter Dennis Paoli has a vast amount of experience with Lovecraft's work. He adapted *Re-Animator*, *From Beyond*, *Castle Freak* and *Dagon* with director Stuart Gordon for the big screen, and he tells us that Lovecraft didn't necessarily create a new style, but rather developed Gothic and pushed it forward to another level. "He was just doing it in a more advanced manner," he explains. "We think of the Gothic as expressionistic – think *Nosferatu* – but it is more often and effectively impressionistic, creeping off the page or crawling off the screen to create a disturbance in your reality,

unsettle your foundations, make an impression on you. I have said it many times: Lovecraft is one of the great Impressionists of American literature. He pressed first-person narration further than anyone since Poe, manipulated the limitations of prose to create insecurity, and was widely read in history and science so his work seemed grounded in possibility, which made it truly terrifying/horrifying. If you know the 18th Century popular Gothic novelist Ann Radcliffe, consider: he pushes her idea of terror as close to her idea of horror as has ever been done."

It has taken a long time for Lovecraft to achieve the kind of critical acclaim that he enjoys today. Although he certainly had acolytes and fans thanks

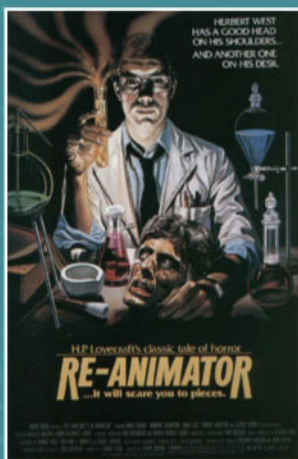
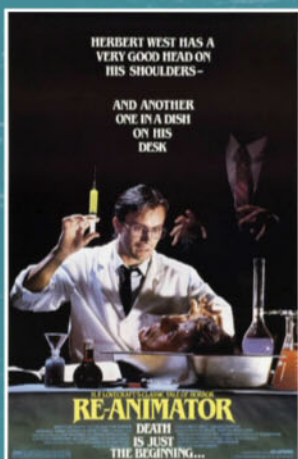
to his short stories and a handful of novel-length tales, his fiction was typically regarded as trashy, pulpy and overwritten, and he never made enough from his writing to live on it. While his purple prose might have alienated reviewers and tastemakers, it has long bewitched and beguiled ➤

Guillermo on... HP Lovecraft

"Lovecraft is to me what I suppose what Tolkien was to Peter Jackson: an obsession that is unquenchable. It really is. I mean, I live with a life-sized sculpture of the guy, so I don't know if I can get any more obsessive without ending up in the nuthouse. I discovered him through a short story called 'The Outsider'. We were driving in the family's car, everybody got out into the house, and I stayed behind in the station wagon reading the story. It came illustrated with a very gruesome illustration, and from that moment on I started seeking his stories."

COVER FEATURE

HP Lovecraft



➤ his readers. Those classic Lovecraft tales told in first person, either as scientific observations, personal diaries or horrified confessionals, plunge us head-first into the nightmare of the narrator. Their fear is our fear, beautifully communicated, and it's easy to see why it made such an impression on legions of genre fans. Before long, Lovecraft became part of the horror canon, among the names that make up the required reading list for anyone interested in horror or science fiction.

"I was a math major in high school, and read a lot of science fiction," says Paoli. "I also met Stuart Gordon, and we both loved horror, especially the American International and Hammer films. Lovecraft appeared in that company; if you're reading [Robert A] Heinlein, [Isaac] Asimov and [Roger] Zelazny and watching movie versions of [Edgar Allan] Poe and [Bram] Stoker, Lovecraft is bound to show up."

Lovecraft's work had been adapted for the movies before Stuart Gordon came along; Vincent Price had starred in *The Haunted Palace*, based on *The Case Of Charles Dexter Ward*, and *The Dunwich Horror* had been made into a film starring Sandra Dee and Dean Stockwell. The first adaptation to truly make a mark would be 1985's brilliant *Re-Animator*. Starring Jeffrey Combs, Barbara Crampton and Dan Cain, Stuart Gordon's film would bring Lovecraft's story of Herbert West and his attempts to bring life to the dead into the modern day, accompanied by buckets of gore, incredible prosthetics and a gleeful sense of humour. *Re-Animator* remains the best film of Lovecraft's work to date.

"First, a good film, in any genre with any budget, is a happy accident," demurs Paoli. "It helps to have good, talented people in as many important positions as possible. And if you have a couple of geniuses around (Stuart and Jeffrey Combs) you have great confidence that you can realise the most difficult and outrageous ideas. And it helped in a number of instances to have a true believer, [producer] Brian Yuzna, piloting your ship of discovery. But taking on Lovecraft is mad – so you start there. Be mad, but stay true to the spirit of the original, as you understand it. I have made the claim that Lovecraft is a particularly literary artist, so you can't be literal or 'faithful' to the text; you have to be a cinematic artist, which Stuart and Jeff and Brian are. In adapting, try to be literal to Lovecraft, go all the way."

That problem of taking Lovecraft literally may be the reason why there

still haven't been very many straight Lovecraft adaptations, at least on the big screen. In spite of this, there are a plethora of filmmakers, authors and artists who will happily point to him as a key inspiration. Writers such as Clive Barker and China Miéville owe him a great debt, while luminaries like Stephen King, Neil Gaiman and Brian Lumley have written stories as direct tributes. In comics, creators like Alan Moore, Steve Niles and Mike Mignola are among those inspired by his work. In film, it's even easier to point and say "Lovecraft." From John Carpenter's apocalyptic trilogy of *They Live*, *Prince Of Darkness* and *In The Mouth Of Madness* to Paul WS Anderson's sci-fi horror *Event Horizon* or even the flailing tentacle beast with a fanged vagina/mouth orifice that tackled the Engineer at the finale of *Prometheus*, his spirit is everywhere. It's not just in the

low-budget horror movies that take a running jump at his public domain short stories with a smile and a prayer; it can be conjured with a chilly atmosphere.

"Partly that's just us loving Lovecraft and seeing him in other things we admire," opines Paoli. "But it's made possible by the breadth of Lovecraft's work. In adapting 'Dreams In The Witch House' for *Masters Of Horror*, I updated it by re-interpreting Lovecraft's conceptualisation of interdimensionality as string theory, but it didn't take much re-interpretation. Lovecraft was smart and focused, and could see the potential outcomes, fantastic as they might be, in much scientific theory of his time. And it was the same with history; he could plumb its psychological depths and find mythology. Cthulhu is the realisation of an imaginative process; it's the name Lovecraft gives to it."

Jeffrey Combs gets to grips with the living dead.



And yet Hollywood still seems to be wary of Lovecraft. We still haven't ever really seen a big-budget straight Lovecraft adaptation, despite the best efforts of the top creators around. Guillermo del Toro has yet to make his film of the best-known Cthulhu tale: *At The Mountains Of Madness*. With Tom Cruise signed on to star and the filmmaker, an avowed devotee of Lovecraft's work, determined to make it work, the project fell apart. Universal were reportedly scared of committing to such a strange, dark and expensive film with an R rating. Del Toro has refused to give up on the movie, but it doesn't feel like we're any closer to actually seeing it.

"Big budgets are big business, so business concerns prevail," Paoli tells. "Lovecraft is subversive, perverse in Poe's sense, and no capitalist worth the name will trust him. They might

trust del Toro, maybe, and they do trust Cruise, but they'll never trust Lovecraft. Besides, *At The Mountains Of Madness* is, for the greater part of the narrative, a museum tour, with some giant albino penguins for companions. It has one of the great set-ups in literature, and a terrific ending, but it's a real challenge to adapt."

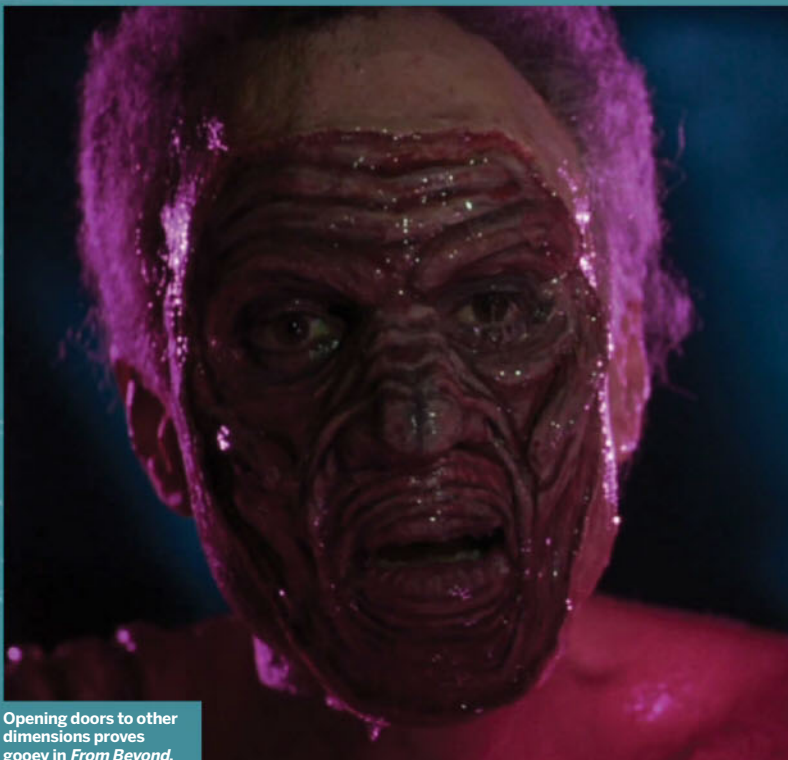
And so, dead Cthulhu lies dreaming still. Perhaps as the years pass and Lovecraft's influence continues to be seen at the fringes of the mainstream, we might have the chance to see him yet. For now, we can enjoy Lovecraft's spirit as writers, artists and filmmakers continue to channel the master. For his part, Paoli still has his eye on one story in particular. "The Thing On The Doorstep – several scripts we've done have come this close to being produced over the past almost 25 years. And the best one still waits."✂



There are head games aplenty in the amazing *Re-Animator*.



Barbara Crampton starred for Gordon again in *Castle Freak*.



Opening doors to other dimensions proves gooey in *From Beyond*.

LOVECRAFT ON SCREEN

Dennis Paoli takes us through his catalogue of shapeless and indescribable movies from out of space

RE-ANIMATOR (1985)

Paoli's first feature collaboration with Stuart Gordon and Brian Yuzna would be their classic update of Herbert West: *Re-Animator*, as their low-budget splatter horror would go on to get great reviews and launch the careers of Gordon, Paoli and star Jeffrey Combs. "Stuart has a great sense of story, is a painter who often does his own story boards so he sees them while reading, and knows what can be technically gotten on to the screen. That decision [to update it] and much of that work was done before I was involved in the project."



FROM BEYOND (1986)

This very loose adaptation starred Jeffrey Combs as the assistant of a scientist who opens a door to another dimension, who is coerced into trying to open it again by his doctor (Barbara Crampton) and a detective (Ken Foree). "My standard line about *From Beyond* is that it's the craziest movie we could make for the budget we had. But the script was much more Lovecraftian; there were scenes in which the geometry of the dimensions changed to Lovecraft's specifications. I wasn't so invested in the creatures; I just wanted the story to keep topping itself and sweep the characters up into as mad a world as we could manage."



CASTLE FREAK (1995)

After nearly ten years, Paoli and Gordon returned to Lovecraft with this ghoulish tale; an adaptation of Lovecraft's *The Outsider*. The story is regarded as one of the author's most classically Gothic, and is heavily influenced by Poe – something that Paoli was drawn to. "Exactly," he remembers. "I was consciously trying to create classic Gothic atmosphere, character, event, and keep it classic. But I worked very hard to make the

characters contemporary, to ground the Gothic (it is the earliest principle of the genre) in recognisable reality. Great performances (shout out to another genius – Barbara Crampton)."



DAGON (2001)

This hugely ambitious and gloriously fishy creature feature, based on *The Shadow Over Innsmouth*, attempts to do a huge amount with a very low budget. "There were so many versions of that adaptation that there literally was nothing we didn't think about trying. We went back to my original version of the story, inspired by *Dagon*, embodied by *Shadow*. The original stories are travelogues that veer immediately or eventually into self-discovery; our film was an action tale, but the basic elements of the originals were ever-present."



DREAMS IN THE WITCH HOUSE (2005)

The sadly short-lived *Masters Of Horror* series gave directors a huge amount of freedom for their one-hour films. "Formats can be fun," he remembers. "I have experienced the tyranny of the feature film and the made-for-TV movie, with strict act structures and the necessity of a 'jeopardy' before every break. But they are challenges that liberate as much as they frustrate. The joy of *Masters Of Horror* was not the available time frame, but the freedom within it to challenge TV taboos, championed by series producer Mick Garris. 'Dreams' is about infanticide – not your normal televised fare, even on cable."





SWAMP THING

THE DAMP KNIGHT RETURNS



DEFINITIVE MODERN SWAMP THING ARTIST YANICK PAQUETTE ON THE MURKY MAGIC OF DC'S TORMENTED BAYOU BEAST

WORDS JAMES HOARE



FROM HELLBOY AND BLADE II TO THE IL-FATED INCREDIBLE HULK TV REBOOT AND THE RUMOURED JUSTICE LEAGUE DARK MOVIE, IT'S CLEAR THAT

Guillermo del Toro prefers his superheroes subject to monstrous transformations and, if possible, supernatural.

"My favourite comics were the horror comics, and the only superheroes I followed were weird ones," the director confirms.

"Like I was very much addicted to *Spider-Man*, but it was because of the geeky aspects of Peter Parker, and I was addicted to *Batman* because I thought the suit was cool, and I kind of gravitated more towards the Jack Kirby darker heroes: The Demon, the New Gods, Kamandi, but I also was very, very fond of the Hulk, Morbius the Living Vampire, *Blade*, *Tomb Of Dracula*... and my mainstays were rip-offs of EC Comics, Creepy, Eerie – all the horror stuff. I'm sort of one-track.

"As a kid I used to read *Superman*, but it was not a general proclivity. I just didn't go for superheroes; I went more for monsters."

Swamp Thing, though, is his favourite. Long before the character became the cool, moody centrepiece of DC Comics' more experimental, adult line – the ground zero around which the whole Vertigo imprint was to coalesce – thanks to writer Alan Moore and artists Stephen Bissette and John Totleben, he was a simple muck monster with an axe to grind.

Introduced by Bernie Wrightson – the definitive horror comic artist – and writer Len Wein in *House Of Secrets* #92 in 1971, Alex Olsen (later Alec Holland) was a Bayou-based scientist caught in a lab explosion. Thrown into the bog, he's crudely transformed, and subsequently seeks revenge on the co-worker who sabotaged his experiment in order to steal his wife.

Wrightson and Wein gave Swamp Thing his look and the broad arc of his motivation, but in 1983 (in the wake of a cheap and daft Wes Craven-directed *Swamp Thing* movie), Moore and his collaborators gave the character a mythology. He was now a



EVERYONE CAN FIND HIS OWN BATMAN, BUT IT'S NOT EVERYONE WHO GETS SWAMP THING

YANICK PAQUETTE

plant elemental, drawing his powers from the Green, and his extended cast included sly Scouse mystic John Constantine.

Though this Eighties run defined the title, French-Canadian artist Yanick Paquette – who came on board with 2011's New 52 reboot (which also introduced the Green's perverted opposite number, the Rot) – was motivated to go right back to the character's roots. Del Toro would definitely approve.

"*Swamp Thing* was about my relationship to comics, because my first true love was Bernie Wrightson," admits Paquette, talking to us at the London Super Comic Convention while inking and washing a Batman sketch.

"If you can find stuff that I did, at maybe 14 years old – you won't find it! – it's filled with Bernie Wrightson gestures, and I picked that up by looking at his work on *Swamp Thing*. Later on I discovered Alan Moore – on *Swamp Thing* again! – and that kept me into comics, as I was losing interest in them.

"It's not everybody who gets *Swamp Thing*," continues Paquette. "You can have manga *Batman*, photorealistic Alex Ross *Batman* – everybody can find his own *Batman*. In *Swamp Thing* it's more general that [the artists] that do it were all lush classic illustrators. After Bissette it was almost a given that they would push the storytelling devices and try to be original and even experimental."

Not that Paquette, who came to prominence with Grant Morrison's *Batman Inc*, was intimidated.

"*Swamp Thing* was like coming home, not only artistically, but as my entire journey into

comics, and I felt for the very first time like I could contribute to a very select bunch of guys, and I proceeded to plug in their names into the book."

Over an 11-issue run with writer Scott Snyder from 2011 to 2013, which earned Paquette two Shuster Awards (for Best Artist and Best Cover Artist), the book worked in numerous nods to the people behind the pages – Wrightson, Wein, Totleben, even *Swamp Thing* movie lead Dick Durock – but the artist's real innovation was in treating the panels themselves as art (and therefore joining a very select group of comic artists that includes JH Williams III).

"All the panels of *Swamp Thing* are kind of like the soundtrack of *Swamp Thing*, so if the Rot acts on reality, the panel can slowly corrupt or something disgusting so it's full of drama. When the Green is acting on reality, the panels suddenly became like branches, and I could fade in and fade out of those panel treatments.

"It gave Scott the liberty of like, in issue seven, which is mostly the Alec Holland character talking with the burning Parliament of Trees in the Green, there's many, many pages of this guy talking to burning trees. At least with my thing they look spectacular, but it's just the panel – it's not what's happening in the actual script!"

Find out about 2015's London Super Comic Convention at www.londonsupercomicconvention.com. *Swamp Thing* is available digitally via Comixology.

Guillermo on... *Swamp Thing*

"*Swamp Thing* was my favourite hero growing up. I sculpted him in clay, I tried to animate him in stop-motion, I drew him incessantly. And for me it's one of the two peaks of creation by Bernie Wrightson, the other one being his *Frankenstein* book. So *Swamp Thing* for me is almost a borderline religious fetish. I really worship that icon. He has such an incredibly soulful, deep emotional world, and yet he has the powers of a god. It's an elemental with an emotional dimension. He manages to marry the profane and the godly in a wonderful way."





CREATING AN ARMY OF VAMPIRES
REQUIRES A LEGION OF CREATURE
CREATORS AND DIGITAL WIZARDS.
WE GO BEHIND THE SCENES WITH
THE FX WIZARDS THEMSELVES
TO UNCOVER JUST HOW MUCH
WORK GOES INTO GIVING
UNNATURAL LIFE TO GUILLERMO DEL
TORO'S KILLING MACHINES...

WORDS JOE NAZZARO

Guillermo on... *The Strain*

"This is a mythology I've been living with for many years... We make it very clear from the first few hours that these creatures are not the romantic version of vampirism, or the glamorous version of how much fun it could be to live forever, but a very painful and biologically challenging species."





THE STRAIN MAKING THE STRAIN'S VAMPIRES

IN A SMALL TORONTO FX LAB, STEVE NEWBURN AND SEAN SANSOM ARE CRANKING OUT VAMPIRE PROSTHETICS BY THE HUNDREDS. THE CAMERAS ARE ABOUT TO ROLL ON SEASON

Two of *The Strain*, and anybody who has read the gripping vampire trilogy by Guillermo del Toro and Chuck Hogan will already know that a good chunk of the world's population has been transformed into undead creatures by the beginning of Book Two, *The Fall*.

That means that Newburn and Sansom, who act as co-creature/make-up FX supervisors on the TV version, have to hit the ground running as far as quality and quantity of their work is concerned. And taking up an additional part of that workload is Mr X, who provide the show's ambitious digital FX.

Newburn and Sansom were wrapping up *Pacific Rim* with del Toro when he hinted that they might be working together in that same year. "We knew it was going to be *The Strain*," Newburn confirms, "and when the producers called to meet with us, they said, 'Get familiar with at least the first book – all three if you have time!' Because of the project's size, we thought we would just be part of the support team and a bigger LA shop would be doing the primary build, but Guillermo said, 'No, I want you to do it all!'"

Del Toro was emphatic that most of the vampire make-up and effects would be done practically. "The first time we met with him," Newburn recalls, "the only thing he wanted to do digitally was the tongues or 'stingers.' The vampires have these six-foot-long tongues that leap out of their mouth, although that evolved just by necessity of the money and time frame it takes to shoot something on a television schedule."

"In terms of design," Sansom says, "he gave us an idea of what he was looking for, and we had to come up with the various stages based on the timeline ramping up to the final 'stage four,' as he called it. There were three stages that preceded it, so we had to break it up as to how people would turn into vampires while making it feasible as a make-up that could be applied within a reasonable amount of time. We knew full well that every other person would be a vampire by Season Two, so we had to take that into account in terms of our workload."

Once a character has been infected with vampirism, there were four distinct stages of the transformation. Stage one was a pale, sickly look, like a bad case of flu, but with slight veining to the skin. In stages two to four, the hair starts falling out, and the victim develops a turkey-like wattle growing out of their necks. "It's the excess skin that allows their neck to expand," explains Newburn, "allowing the stinger to propel itself. In stage two, the hair is thinning out, and there are hints of this neck wattle starting to appear. In stage three, the wattle is more pronounced, and it's more like a chemo look."

"They also start to get pointed teeth and the ears get slightly pointy," interjects Sansom. "They also have black contact lenses with a pronounced ➤



The vampire make-up was created by Newburn and Sansom.



COVER FEATURE

The Strain

➤ reddish-orange ring, like a raven's eye. And in the fourth stage, the hair is basically gone and the wattle is much more pronounced."

Most aspects of the vampire look were conceived as practical elements, but it was decided early on that most of the stinger shots would be done digitally. "We did a couple of early screen tests where we shot one of our animators in our lobby," recalls Dennis Berardi, president of Mr X, the Toronto-based shop that contributed over 1,000 shots to the first season. "We did a full digital face replacement, unhinging the jaw and deploying the stinger, pretty much the way it was described in the books. Guillermo quite liked it; in fact, I think that's what got us hired initially."

"As we began to understand there were going to be a lot of these vampires and a lot of stinger moments, we had to find a way of streamlining the process. We showed Guillermo a test where we didn't unhinge the jaw, but had a neck prosthetic where you get this 'loading up' of the stinger into a bulging neck, so the mouth opens and the stinger shoots out without having to replace the entire actor's face, and Guillermo bought into that. He said, 'That's not a compromise at all; in fact, in some ways it's better, so if it's cheaper, let's go for it!'"

Mr X also dealt with shots of much older vampires, such as Eichorst (Richard Sammel), whose noses had atrophied over several decades. "Eichorst is a great example," claims Berardi, "because we see him putting on his human face in Episode Three and he doesn't have a nose, so I was thinking, 'Do I get the guys to build me a nose and shoot it with motion-control and comp it in? What do we do here?'"

"We finally had Eichorst with a green-screen nose with the rest of the make-up done practically, and the guys built me a socket, literally just a nose prosthetic, which we scanned, textured, lit and rendered digitally in the computer, and tracked onto the live-action photography. We scanned the actor's face as well, so we had that textural skin surface, and the digital prosthetic was tracked in and re-projected over the skin, and feathered in with a very light hand."

Creating a city full of vampires was just a small part of the workload for Newburn and Sansom, who began their work on *The Strain's* first season constructing the Master's elaborately carved coffin, not to mention the Master himself. Del Toro had commissioned concept art from Guy Davis, as well as maquettes of the

"IF IT'S CHEAPER, LET'S GO FOR IT!"

Guillermo del Toro

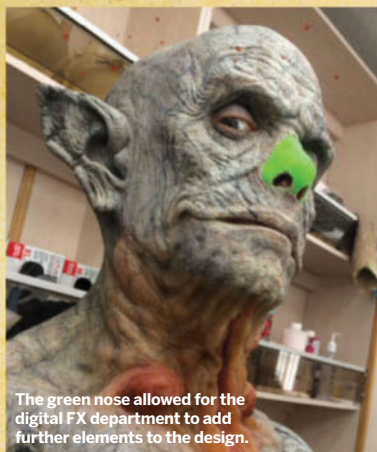


"the biggest thing for the pilot was the morgue scene, with all the dead people from the plane, so we had a lot of people in various stages of autopsy."

The Master himself was built around seven-foot ex-wrestler-turned-actor Robert Maillet, who arrived at the Toronto creature shop for his life cast in the second or third week of prep. "At that point, Guillermo was editing *Pacific Rim*," recalls Sansom, "so we set up a private website to send him photos and videos of our progress. He was approving everything and saying, 'It's beautiful, I love it!' so we were thinking, 'That was easy!' and moving forward."



The intricate level of detail certainly reflects well on the work of the special effects team.



The green nose allowed for the digital FX department to add further elements to the design.



Master from Simon Lee, which had to be adapted into a workable make-up. "While we were working on the coffin," recalls Sansom, "Mario Torres came up and started sculpting the Master for us. There were also things like the stinger and body parts in jars to be done."

"The coffin was a huge build for us," adds Newburn. "We ultimately built three of them: one that opened with swinging doors, and two that didn't. They were nine feet long, four feet high and three feet wide, completely covered in carvings. We probably spent eight weeks on the coffin."

"Aside from that," adds Newburn, "the biggest thing for the pilot was the morgue scene, with all the dead people from the plane, so we had a lot of people in various stages of autopsy."

"We were also working on an animatronic puppet of the Master, which was incredibly complex for television [and ultimately never used in the series], and Guillermo came back here about six or seven weeks after we started. He took one look at the sculpture and said, 'It's too monstrous; I want it to look more like Robert!' so we started all over again."

In addition to the Master, there were a number of 'hero' make-ups to create, from Ephraim (Corey Stoll)'s wife Kelly (Natalie Brown) to Jim Watson, who underwent extensive prosthetics to turn him into a young Abraham Setrakian. And of course, there were the Ancients, the three vampires that stem from the same race as The Master. As Sansom recalls, "Simon Lee did maquettes of one of the ancients, which was very rough and loose, but Guillermo wanted us to follow the artwork from a cover of the comic-book with the three of them."



Fitting prosthetics to actors is a timely task, which was elevated for the Season One finale.



"WE TOOK A BODY CAST OF DOUG JONES AND SCULPTED A SUIT OVER IT"
SEAN SANSOM



As you can see, the end result is gruesomely realistic.

"We took a body cast of [the Master actor] Doug Jones and sculpted a suit over it, and that was utilised for the other two Ancients as well. We had a couple of dancers with a similar physique, so we could make it work for them, and we had their head casts already, but we made generic hands and feet for them. On the day we made them up, we put them in the suits first, put on their gloves and boots and made them up with the make-ups, which were custom-fit to each of them."

There was also Quinlan (Stephen McHattie), who represents a race of half-vampire hunters seen near the end of Season One. "Guillermo wanted them to have that marble-skinned look he used in *Cronos* and *Blade II*," explains Sansom. "All of those guys had a full foam latex make-up, with a silicone wattle for translucency. The only difference with the Master is Guillermo wanted to see light come through his

ears, while the Ancients and Quinlan have that marbled paint job, which is more opaque."

Perhaps unsurprisingly, things got especially hectic for the make-up FX team by the time it came to shoot episode 13, which featured a number of the key creatures. "There was one crazy day," remembers Newburn, "when we had the McHattie character and his double for interrogation of Gus (Miguel Gomez) scenes."

"We had been on set the day before," Sansom picks up the story, "making up Robert as the Master and Matt Taylor as his double, for the scene where he gets burned up on the balcony. We didn't wrap until 12:30 that night, and our call time for the next morning was 5am."

"At a different location, of course!" finishes Newburn. "We also found out the night before that they needed a double for McHattie, so when he came in the next morning, Colin Penman

and I made up McHattie, while Sean airbrushed the double to look like he had the same prosthetic pieces on him."

Looking back at their work on *The Strain*, both Newburn and Sansom both note – half jokingly – that perhaps their biggest accomplishment was surviving it. "I think the Master's coffin was definitely big for us," reflects Sansom, turning serious. "It's a prop, but it looks like an antique, hand-carved box. We were able to spend a lot of time on it because it was still early on, without any looming deadlines."

"I think Season Two will prove to be easier, because we now have all this stock to fall back on, so we have a starting point. We know where things are going, and how they are going to be shot, whereas everything was a question mark the first time around."

The Strain is airing now at 10pm on Wednesdays on Watch.

20 years of del Toro creatures

Del Toro's most memorable monsters and the FX wizards who created them...

Cronos (1993)

Del Toro signs up for make-up legend Dick Smith's Advanced Make-up Course to handle the film's make-up FX himself.



Mimic (1997)

Rick Lazzarini's Character Shop provides the big bugs, although the film is re-cut into a version with which del Toro is less than pleased. A director's cut DVD is released in 2011.



The Devil's Backbone (2001)

Del Toro enlists a young Spain-based shop, DDT, whose biggest responsibility is creating the cracked porcelain-like skin of Santi.



Blade II (2002)

The extensive FX are done by XFX's Steve Johnson, who assembles a small army of FX wizards, including Mike Elizalde, who will go on to create Spectral Motion.



Hellboy (2004)

Several FX companies are brought on board, like Rick Baker's Cinovation, who designed and built the Hellboy make-up, and Spectral Motion, who create Abe Sapien.



Pan's Labyrinth

(2006)
Del Toro re-enlists the team at DDT, who win an Oscar for their ambitious creatures, notably Doug Jones as the Faun and Pale Man.



Hellboy II: The Golden Army (2008)

Spectral Motion handles the bulk of creature work, which is divided up between various UK and European shops.



Pacific Rim (2013)

Largely a CGI-fest, it still features a fair amount of practical work by Legacy Effects and Spectral Motion.



Crimson Peak (2015)

Del Toro brings back the DDT team for his still-under-wraps gothic ghost story.

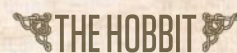






Guillermo on... *The Hobbit*

"The two texts of Tolkien that transformed me as a kid were actually *On Fairy-Stories*, his book on fairy tales, and *The Hobbit*. As a kid I never got into the trilogy; I tried, and it was too dense for my primitive brain, you know? But *The Hobbit* enchanted me as a kid. I thought it was incredibly compelling in the way that it functioned as a fairy tale, but then transformed into a more epic scale. Some of the fairy tales I loved as a kid like *The Snow Queen* functioned in the way that *The Hobbit* did, which was function as an intimate story and ended up on an epic scale. Tolkien's reflections upon fairy-tale narrative were of huge importance to shaping my view of the genre."



THERE AND BACK AGAIN

IT'S BEEN 13 YEARS SINCE AUDIENCES FIRST DISCOVERED PETER JACKSON'S MIDDLE-EARTH, BUT THE HOBBIT: THE BATTLE OF THE FIVE ARMIES MARKS THE END OF THE BEGINNING. WE TALK TO THE CAST ABOUT THE FINAL CHAPTER...

WORDS POPPY-JAY PALMER

WHEN IT WAS ANNOUNCED THAT THE TITLE OF THE FINAL HOBBIT FILM HAD BEEN CHANGED FROM THERE AND BACK AGAIN TO THE BATTLE OF THE FIVE

Armies, you couldn't blame some fans for feeling slightly uneasy. The former was taken from the full title of Tolkien's original story (*The Hobbit, Or There And Back Again*); it had a hobbit feel to it, and it was familiar. In contrast, *The Battle Of The Five Armies* suggests that much darker things are ahead. But since seeing footage from trailers, the new title suddenly seems more appropriate. This is no longer a tale of gold and adventure; it's something bigger than that. *The Hobbit* will soon be transforming into an epic riddled with war and suffering.

"Can you promise that I will come back?" Bilbo asked Gandalf from his armchair in Bag End. "No," said Gandalf, "and if you do, you will not be the same." They may have already reached their destination, but Bilbo (Martin Freeman), Thorin (Richard Armitage) and company still have one hell of a journey ahead of them.

"What have we done?" Bilbo's last words in *The Desolation Of Smaug* cut through the silence as the dragon made his way to

annihilate the people of Lake-town. Since the start of Bilbo's journey, he has faced wargs, orcs, goblins, spiders and obstacles he would never have dared to imagine from the comfort of his hobbit hole.

On the other hand, the ride has been pretty sweet for Martin Freeman. In the last few years he's gone from BBC favourite via *The Office* to global star, with his hobbit face plastered over t-shirts, lunch boxes, mugs, action figures, bobble heads and more. This Christmas – like the last two before it – there will be a whole new explosion of merchandise in anticipation for *The Battle Of The Five Armies*, and Freeman won't be able to walk a few steps without seeing himself on a billboard or on the side of a bus.

"To be honest, I am used to it," Freeman tells us. "I mean, it's always strange, but I'm used to the strangeness now. I remember when *The Hobbit* opened in New Zealand, and it was in every street in Wellington. It was like I was an Eastern European dictator or something. Every lamppost had an image of me looking stern. Actually, I'm not stern. I would be the nicest dictator in the world – a gentle dictator. But yeah, it was everywhere. We flew out on a fucking plane with my ➤

COVER FEATURE

The Hobbit: The Battle Of The Five Armies

face on it! Fortunately for my sanity, I know that has nothing to do with me. I got on a train that was already moving from *Lord Of The Rings*, and yes, I'm an important passenger on the train, but the train was always going."

Buses and billboard also come with screaming girls, but Freeman admits to never getting used to that. "I never really thought about the screaming girls, to be honest," he says. "I don't think anyone who's ended up with screaming girls has ever thought, 'I must get some screaming girls.' I think it's a band thing. It's pretty unexpected for an actor, and to be honest I've got screaming girls now. Where were they when I needed them?"

The end of Bilbo's journey is already on the horizon. He'll not only have to say goodbye to Middle-Earth beyond the Shire, but also Gandalf and the company of dwarves who have become his friends. Naturally, Freeman has also had to bid the franchise farewell, and it ended up being more emotional than was expected.

"I was working with Richard Armitage and Graham McTavish [Dwalin], and I was feeling fine. I was feeling like the finishing line was in sight. I just wanted to cross the finishing line and have it done, you know? I always like finishing jobs. It's over and it's done, and there's nothing you can do about it. I'm very comfortable with things stopping. But then Graham shook my hand, and had a little catch in his voice, and said, 'It's been lovely working with you,' and I thought, 'Christ, I'm going to go here.' I felt my eyes well up, and it suddenly hit me that I've spent two and a half years on and off with these people. They've been a huge part of my life, and this job - this experience - has been a huge part of my life."

UNLIKE FREEMAN, WHO HAS BEEN ON THE TOLKIEN TRAIN FOR THREE YEARS, IAN MCKELLEN HOPPED ABOARD AT THE END OF THE LAST CENTURY. BUT SINCE DEFENDING

Middle-Earth as the wizened Gandalf the White, he has reversed to his roots to play the irascible, pipeweed-smoking, grey-hued wizard we know and love.

"Gandalf's been sent down to look after Middle-Earth," says McKellen, "and when the dwarves say they want to go and get their money and land back, he doesn't necessarily think it's a good idea, except it would sent shockwaves through Middle-Earth, and he'd be interested in seeing what the response was, because he senses something else was going on. So in a sense he's using and manipulating the dwarves."

At lot has changed since McKellen made his debut as Gandalf in 2001. Technology has caught up with Peter Jackson's imagination, for a start. McKellen describes the Gollum in the *Lord Of The Rings* trilogy as "a muppet" compared to the CG tour de force we saw in the 'Riddles In The Dark' sequence in *An Unexpected Journey*. However, the technology involved in making the films still causes problems for McKellen.

"It would be nice to be able to be in the presence of the person you're talking to and look into their eyes," he tells us. "In most films you can do that, but in these films you can't - unless I'm talking to Cate Blanchett, Hugo Weaving or Christopher Lee, as we're all of a height. But if I'm talking to a hobbit then I'm not looking at them. I never truly got to act with Martin Freeman or Elijah Wood; we never looked each other in the eye. I had to look at their belly buttons, and they had to look at the top of my hat. Sometimes we're not ever in the same studio, so that is very, very bizarre and

difficult. But acting is a technical business, and the trick is to appear to be as free as possible within the constraints, and we all feel that, I think."

McKellen started filming on *The Fellowship Of The Ring* way back in 1999, so having spent over 15 years in Tolkien's world, the coming of the end must feel like a bit of a blow, to say the least. As if channelling Gandalf himself, he has some wisdom to impart on the subject of ending.

"It doesn't feel like the end, really," McKellen says. "It's a long time since we filmed it. But in the meantime it will carry on. People keep coming up to me and saying how much they like the films, particularly young kids - kids who weren't born when we started filming [on *The Lord Of The Rings*] in 1999, but I

◦ Below: Gandalf (Ian McKellen) looks a little worse for wear.

◦ Opposite clockwise from top: Luke Evans stars as the Bard; Lee Pace as Thranduil; and Evangeline Lilly as elven archer Tauriel.



DEL TORO IN THE HOBBIT

We look at how our guest editor influenced Jackson's choices in The Hobbit



THE GOBLIN KING

The Great Goblin, the hideous goblin king, is very reminiscent of the vile and fantastical creatures found at the troll market in *Hellboy II: The Golden Army*. Creating repulsive but humanoid creatures is a del Toro speciality.



BEORN

The monstrous shape-shifter Beorn's gruff and unkempt human appearance has Guillermo's style written all over him, which is fitting as del Toro first wrote the role for his long-time film brother Ron Perlman.



THE FOREST OF SPIDERS

Del Toro's hit *Pan's Labyrinth* seems to be lending its setting to the forest of Mirkwood. The twisting vines and bluish hue of the forest create an uneasy feeling, that there is something nasty lurking in the shadows.



THE TREETOPS

When Bilbo emerges from the treetops out of the dark forest, there is a moment of beautiful clarity. Though the hobbit is frequently made the face his fears, the story is, after all, still a fantastical fairy tale.



LAKE-TOWN

While navigating through the creaking, crooked buildings of Lake-town, there's a sense of foreboding in the air. It could be the fog, but it's more likely the corrupt government inflicting poverty on the townspeople.

THE HOBBIT: THE BATTLE OF THE FIVE ARMIES

There And Back Again



COVER FEATURE

The Hobbit: The Battle Of The Five Armies



“THIS JOB – THIS EXPERIENCE – HAS BEEN A HUGE PART OF MY LIFE”
MARTIN FREEMAN



• Clockwise from top: Freeman faces war as Bilbo; Whatever Gandalf can see, it can't be good; Smaug terrorises Lake-town; Evans and Bloom struggled to say goodbye; *The Battle Of The Five Armies* is all about the war.



ORLANDO BLOOM

LEGOLAS ON...

ENDING

“It really felt like the end of a long journey. Pete had the music queued up for my last shot of the day, which was part of one of the final battle sequences. He had the music queued up from the *Lord Of The Rings* theme! So I'm standing there with my sword above my head, and suddenly this music comes on, and I was like 'Ahh!' That was quite amusing.”

THE LORD OF THE RINGS

“Legolas has been the character that has resonated in my career most, I would say. And for me, he was the first role that I got to play, and it was really a very defining time. And those movies... nobody had any idea how successful *The Lord Of The Rings* would be when we first started it. It was a really long shot. Coming back to *The Hobbit* was a real joy.”

LEGOLAS

“Tolkien said, ‘The less wise the more dangerous!’ The relationship between Thranduil and Legolas is really tested. Legolas is made aware of the plight of humans in the story and their need for the elves to step in and come to their aid. You see through his eyes – in terms of an elf perspective – what needs to be done, and therefore who that character is...”

THE HOBBIT

“In *The Lord Of The Rings* he's much more conscious of the past, of the relationship between the dwarves and the elves, of the fact that Thorin stands his ground, and the impact that has on everyone. He's a wiser character for the experiences that he goes through in *The Hobbit*, in the last sequence, in the last of this trilogy. In the books, even though he isn't mentioned in *The Hobbit*, he would have had some experience.”

THE HOBBIT: THE BATTLE OF THE FIVE ARMIES

There And Back Again

➤ suppose that's going to go on. Gandalf isn't packed up in a suitcase and forgotten about, which is lovely."

THE LAST WE SAW OF THORIN OAKENSHIELD, HE WAS ROBBING DRAGONS AND THROWING SHADE. BUT WHEN AN UNSTOPPABLE FORCE

meets an immovable object – in this case the Arkenstone – something has to give. Thorin's need to be in control could finally be what breaks him.

"You're going to see a lot of his psychology," Richard Armitage confirms. "You see him descend mentally and physically into the mountain and become very singular. He becomes very isolated and becomes very obsessed with Bilbo, and you do see him emerge and lead his people to war and fight to the bitter end. You see that heroic core of him make everything else fall away.

"It's hard to make a judgment on him, because I will defend him [and the decisions he made] until the end of time, but I supposed I still believe that he did the right thing... I should be saying that he should have been on the side of harmony and given a share of the wealth to the men of the lake... then by saying that I would say that he shouldn't have got the dragon sickness but he did, and it was his fate to be redeemed

from that. It was his fate to go down that wormhole, and it was out of his hands. But I supposed the potential to be consumed by greed and accumulation is something that the film describes as a negative force, which I think is probably a good message."

A lot of Thorin's actions have been fuelled by what he believes to be his destiny. The dwarves are the rightful owners of the gold of Erebor, and he believes it's his and the company's fate to take it back. Armitage is adamant that he believes in fate too.

"It's probably because I grew up reading books like Tolkien and he primarily crafted my imagination... I don't remember being into a writer as much as I was Tolkien. He believes in that. He believes in a kind of honour-driven destiny... When that phone call came about *The Hobbit*, it's days like that when you think, 'Was I always meant to play this? Is that why I was reading the books when I was seven years old, because somehow, somebody or something in the universe knew that I was going to play this?' I figured there had to be a through line. I mean, I'm sure there are a million actors who didn't get the role and went, 'But I was meant to play that!' I don't know. It was a hook that caught me when I was seven and dragged me into my 40th year when I took on the role. So I do believe in those things."

PRECIOUS THINGS

The gifts the cast picked to remember *The Hobbit* by

After all the work Weta put into creating the props for the series, it would be a shame to just chuck them away. Luckily, the cast were happy to take a few bits off their hands. Martin Freeman begrudged giving up the Ring, but he did get Bilbo's dressing gown, the contract drawn up by Thorin and sword Sting to take home. Richard Armitage was given Thorin's sword and shield, the map to Erebor and a piece of gold, while Luke Evans took home the sword of Girion. Luckily they didn't have to sneak their swords through customs. "They kindly ship it back for you," Evans tells us. "One, it would cost a lot. Two, you'd get a lot of questions, and three, the last thing you want after a 29-hour flight is to explain why you've got a sword."

BARD THE BOWMAN (LUKE EVANS) WAS STUCK BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE – JAIL – WHEN WE LEFT HIM AT THE END OF THE DESOLATION OF SMAUG.

We know he makes it out, as he's scattered across various posters and trailers (and the book, obviously), but he's still got a fight on his hands – not only with the dragon, but with the majority of Middle-Earth.

"It's a very powerful, politically driven plotline," Evans tells us. "It incorporates everyone. *The Battle Of The Five Armies*: five armies! Five separate entities that are all involved in the same storyline. It's a fascinating part of the journey through this Middle-Earth chapter. It sets up a fantastic, sad and powerful storyline. There's this threat of all these armies trying to get to the mountain. So I think that's why the title was changed. It's going to be a very powerful finale, and we're dealing with a huge amount of death, tragedy and loss."

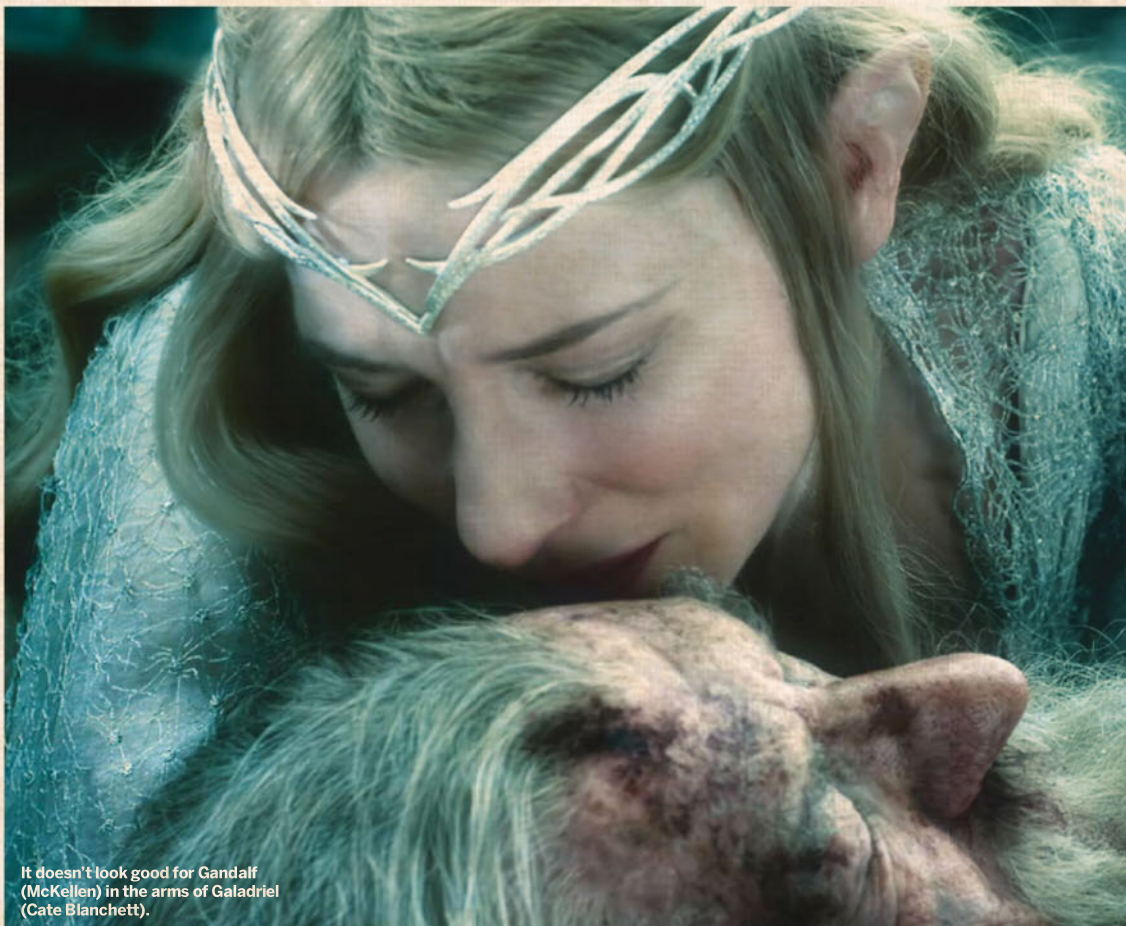
All Bard wants is for his family to be safe. His ancestor Lord Girion of Dale failed to kill Smaug when he had the chance, so you'd presume Bard's main motive would be to redeem his family name, as is common behaviour of Middle-Earthians, but Bard really isn't too hung up on it all, and Evans insists he's much the same.

"Life's too short," he tells us. "I could be dead tomorrow. I could get run over by a bus this afternoon. That's the way I look at it. You just get on with life. And Bard's a bit like that, I think. Bard could have just got on a boat and disappeared with his kids and left whatever to happen, but he didn't. He actually said, 'Alright, no one else is going to do this. I'm going to do it. I don't know *how* I'm going to do it.' You see this man and he's just a human. He's with flaws and failure like the rest of us, and carrying the resentment for his ancestors and he picks up the baton."

Although Evans was a relatively new addition to the Tolkien family, having made his first appearance halfway through *The Desolation Of Smaug*, the end of *The Hobbit* era hit him as hard as the rest of the cast. He never fancied getting a commemorative tattoo like the *Lord Of The Rings* cast for fear it would be copying. Besides, his memories are 'tattooed right here', he says, pointing to his head.

"All the last days come quite close together, so you'd see people, and we're all dropping like flies one by one, and you hear about the big goodbye that somebody had, and another one of the characters have gone, and another one, and it comes down to your day, and you wake up in the morning like, 'I'm not going to come back. Today is my last day. I'm not getting on a plane and then coming back in a few weeks.'" ✨

The Hobbit: The Battle Of The Five Armies will be released in cinemas on 12 December.



It doesn't look good for Gandalf (McKellen) in the arms of Galadriel (Cate Blanchett).

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MUST-SEE TV

The Flash





SPEED FORCE

SPINNING OUT OF ARROW, THE FLASH LOOKS TO CONTINUE DC'S DOMINANCE OF SUPERHERO TV. WE TALK TO STAR GRANT GUSTIN AND PRODUCER GREG BERLANTI ABOUT LIVING UP TO THE LEGEND AND FANS' EXPECTATIONS...

WORDS EDWARD GROSS

FROM THE MOMENT GRANT GUSTIN ARRIVES, THERE SEEMS TO BE SOMETHING A LITTLE... OFF. PERHAPS IT'S THE 'S' EMBLEM ON HIS T-SHIRT, OR THE TATTOO ON HIS ARM

that reads 'Superman... I love him'. Both of which would be perfectly logical if the actor had been signed to play the Man of Steel, but the reality is that he is playing Barry Allen in The CW's *The Flash*, DC's latest superhero-inspired series. So what gives?

"I am a lifelong Superman fan," he shares with a smile, "and if I had gone to Comic-Con prior to being cast as in this role, it would have been in a Superman costume."

With that, he flashes the tattoo. "When I was a kid," Gustin reflects, "I was a huge Superman fan, and I was really into drawing and colouring. When I was four or five, my mum used to draw Superman for me, and I would colour that in. That's why the tattoo is her handwriting."

Prior to being cast as the Flash, he had starred in two episodes of *Arrow* as Barry

Allen, which effectively served as the pilot for the new series.

Offers executive producer Greg Berlanti, "One of our major concerns when we were introducing Grant as Barry Allen on *Arrow* was maintaining the believability of the show. You're still in a heightened world, so it was like introducing an organ into a body. I think so much of that is sold with Grant. When he came into the *Arrow* universe, we knew if you could believe him, and want to believe in him and what sort of happened to him, and then the same thing when he's transferred over to his own show, you would want to just believe in that world."

One thing is for certain: the 24-year-old seems to be having a great time, joyfully taking it all in, from his place in the DC Universe right down to his Flash costume.

"I'm glad that the final design of the costume is not spandex," he laughs. "I loved the one in the pilot, but it was really heavy. Since then, we've made it ten pounds lighter, so I love the suit now. I was in it for 13 hours the other day, and it was fine. It's actually pretty comfy."

The same could be said regarding his feeling for the character of Barry himself, a character that he easily identifies with. "He's just so full of hope and optimism," Gustin enthuses, "which is relatable for everyone – everyone would like to have those aspects. I think that I do, and that I always have. I believe that to stay sane in this business some optimism is necessary, so I relate to that for sure. And he's just so sweet – I've

played so many characters that I would never be friends with, who I wouldn't even want to be in the same room with, so it's nice to play someone that people like, and I would like. He's funny and now he's a superhero."

While the actor's devotion to Superman is obvious, the real question is how much he knew about *The Flash* prior to taking on the role. "Not an incredible amount," he admits. "I mean, I knew what his suit looked like, and kind of the basics of the origin story, ➤



MUST-SEE TV

The Flash



➤ and to be honest that's about it. I've read a lot of the comics since I got the role – I started at the beginning first. I thought I'd go all the way back and read, and then I was like, "This is impossible, I can't do that." There are so many versions of the Flash, and even different versions of Barry. So I read some of the old stuff, and I worked my way to the *New 52* series. I'm pretty much just reading that now; it's the closest to what we're doing.

"At the same time, what we're doing has not been done in the comics. It's a very different Barry Allen. A lot of the characters are very different from the comics, but they're of the same heart. So I've done plenty of the research, but [executive producers] Andrew Kreisberg, Geoff Johns and Greg Berlanti are my research, and if I need information, I can just talk to them. I don't have to flip through the comics to try and find something that relates to the episode we're doing. I just call and have a conversation with them."

One thing that he has not talked to them about is including a certain power that's been part of the character's comic-book history: "It's been teased already, but I hope we start to incorporate some time travel, just because I think it presents the opportunity for a lot of fun storylines."

CROSSOVER APPEAL

When The Flash and Arrow's worlds collide

In *Arrow*, the producers attempted to keep the show grounded in a gritty and real setting. The introduction of Barry Allen in Season Two shook it up, and in Season Three there's former Superman Brandon Routh as Ray Palmer, who is destined to become the Atom. But with *The Flash*, the very nature of the character could conceivably open the floodgates for further exploration of the DC Universe – helped in no small way in its debut season with the introduction of Firestorm.

"*Arrow* in its DNA has got that epic crime-drama kind of element to it," relates executive producer Greg Berlanti, "though we do have larger-than-life things that come through. Hopefully we won't change the algorithm too much, but then when the two shows do cross over, you'll see those worlds colliding. The best representation of that for me was in comic-books when they would bring two characters or teams together and it didn't overtake the

world. Then, when they would go their separate ways, the comic-books would become themselves again."

The feeling is that at some point we'll get a scenario in which viewers will see *Arrow*, the Flash, the Atom, Wildcat, Firestorm and others coming together for a scenario that will play out over both shows. While neither confirming nor denying this possibility, Berlanti nonetheless recognises the appeal of the idea.

"When I was 13, the first comics I was reading was DC's *Crisis On Infinite Earths*," he offers. "I know where they are in my house and I know how quickly I could get to them in a fire. I don't have a lot of items like that in my house. I've actually thought, 'Alright, so if that happened, I would go there and grab them.' They were so evocative, and having all of those characters together was what was so evocative. So bringing these characters together would be a dream, but we have to be really successful individually first."



It's not always easy being the Flash; he gets into his fair share of scrapes.



IN THE COMICS, THE FLASH PRETTY MUCH WORKS ALONE (UNLESS HE'S TEAMING UP WITH THE JUSTICE LEAGUE), BUT ON THE SHOW HE'S PART OF A GROUP THAT INCLUDES

Danielle Panabaker as Dr Caitlin Snow (in the comics the alter ego of Killer Frost), a bioengineering expert; Carlos Valdes as Cisco Ramon (the name behind the comic character Vibe), a mechanical engineering genius who, like Snow, works at Central City's STAR Labs, who both previously starred in *Arrow*; and Tom Cavanagh as Dr Harrison Wells, the mind and money behind the STAR Labs Particle Accelerator, the device whose malfunction transforms Barry Allen into

The Flash and serves as the impetus behind the creation of many of Central City's biggest threats.

"I think having Barry as part of a team is necessary," says Gustin. "I think if he just woke up with these powers and started running around, he'd be dead, probably. He needs his team for sure."

While it often takes a period of adjustment for an actor to feel comfortable with his character, Gustin notes that he and Barry bonded pretty quickly, the most daunting part of it all being cast in the part in the first place.

"Actually," he corrects, "it was a little daunting when I got the audition, to be honest. I was excited to have the



"IT WAS A LITTLE DAUNTING WHEN I GOT THE AUDITION, TO BE HONEST"

GRANT GUSTIN



opportunity. Some things you end up saying to yourself, 'I've got a really good feeling about this,' but I didn't necessarily think that about this role. But now that I've got it, I can see why they wanted to go in this direction. It's kind of a different take on the Flash, and I'm definitely feeling like I'm in his skin already; I'm having a lot of fun. They've already written in my voice, so it's easy enough to just kind of do it. It's just the most fun I've ever had."

As noted previously, the actor's background includes a recurring role on *Glee*, which was a groundbreaking show in a number of ways, including its presentation of gay characters. *The* ➤

The costume was what made it feel real to Grant Gustin as the Flash.



"Lightning gave me abs?" Barry ended up in a coma at the end of his time in *Arrow*.



FLASHES OF FUTURE PAST

Original Flash John Wesley Shipp on passing the torch

"Deja vu all over again." That's how John Wesley Shipp describes being on the set of a show called *The Flash*. Back in 1990, he played the title character in a version of the show. Now, he's playing Barry Allen's father Henry, who has been arrested for the murder of his wife.

"You couldn't do much CGI then," he offers. "Now, they can do so much in post-production, and that makes it a lot easier when you're not trying to do all practical effects. It's also amazing to see how the sensibility around this character has evolved. It's a smarter sensibility in the fact that we're no longer in the Mark McGwire/Jose Canseco pumping iron post-steroid hangover era, so we can address the fact that *The*

Flash is about speed and needs to be aerodynamic, and Grant is perfect.

"When I first found out I would be playing his father, I looked at *Arrow* because I wanted to see how Grant worked," Shipp adds. "I was relieved to see that he's really sincere. I don't know what he was pulling on when he was talking about his dad, but it was simple, honest and it had energy – it wasn't acting. That's the most important thing: no acting, please. It was very real. And then we did the scene in the prison together, and I thought, 'This kid has chops.' Jesse Martin said it best. He said if the show works, it works for one reason: it's because that guy's head and heart are in alignment. I couldn't be happier."



MUST-SEE TV

The Flash

ON YOUR MARKS, GET SET... SHOW!

WHICH SCI-FI TV SERIES HAVE GONE THE DISTANCE,
AND WHICH HAVE FALLEN BY THE WAYSIDE?

WORDS STEVE WRIGHT

● Angel

The David Boreanaz-fronted spin-off had a lot to do to set it apart from the massively successful *Buffy*, but it did it. Only an unwarranted cancellation meant this stumbled before the end.

1

Year: 1999
Seasons: 5
Episodes: 110

● Torchwood

The 'racier' offshoot of *Doctor Who* was as inconsistent as it's possible to be, veering from *Scooby-Do* capers to child deaths on a whim. Nonetheless, we won't rule out a late return to the race.

2

Year: 2006
Seasons: 4
Episodes: 41

● The Bionic Woman

In a unique case, ABC's *The Bionic Woman* aired in tandem with its predecessor, *The Six Million Dollar Man*, with characters crossing over. But being a fan-favourite was not enough to go the distance.

3

Year: 1976
Seasons: 3
Episodes: 58

● Xena: Warrior Princess

Having been intended to be killed off after a three-episode slot as a baddie in *Hercules*, Xena instead chose life and do-gooding. Ultimately, she would eclipse her forebear, racing to the head of the pack.

4

Year: 1995
Seasons: 6
Episodes: 134

● The Sarah Jane Adventures

Elisabeth Sladen's appearance in new *Who* gave her the chance to star in her own show, but in a cruel twist of fate, her race was tragically cut short.

5

Year: 2007
Seasons: 5
Episodes: 53

● Millennium

A master of unfulfilled potential, *Millennium* should have had it all. Yet, despite being set in the same universe as *The X-Files*, it eventually ran out of steam.

6

Year: 1996
Seasons: 3
Episodes: 67

● The Originals

The race is still very much going on this one: the first few hurdles have been scaled, but there's still a long way to go if this wants to match the pace set by *The Vampire Diaries*. Still, we fancy its chances.

7

Year: 2013
Seasons: 2
Episodes: TBC

● The Lone Gunmen

The other *X-Files* spin-off was always going to be the underdog. After tailing off, *The Lone Gunmen* retired early.

8

Year: 2001
Seasons: 1
Episodes: 13



➤ *Flash* is going to feature Andy Mientus (*Smash*) as Hartley Rathaway, also known as the Pied Piper, an openly gay villain who after losing his hearing as a result of the particle accelerator malfunction, seeks to destroy the Flash. Featuring a gay villain on a show such as this one is a first for the superhero genre, and it's something that Gustin is pleased that the show is showing.

"It's true, it hasn't really been done with this genre, so it's great," he says. "It's going to be a whole broader spectrum than *Glee* can bring in for fans. It's great, and I like being a part of it."

IN GENERAL, THERE IS A HISTORY – MORE SO IN THE SUPERHERO/SCI-FI GENRES – OF ACTORS BEING THE TARGETS WHEN FANS DON'T AGREE WITH THEIR BEING HIRED FOR A CERTAIN ROLE.

That was what he thought would be the most challenging aspect of being cast.

"At first, I thought it was just going to be the pressure I was going to get from the fans that I was the right Flash," states Gustin, "but they've been really accepting. The producers earned the trust of the fans with *Arrow*. They trust that this is going to be good. Now, with the shooting schedule that we have, I'm trying to maintain also being able to train and eat as much as I can, because I'm a thin guy, and trying to maintain my body while doing the schedule is a real challenge."

If you were to look at *The Flash's* companion series, *Arrow*, having a leading man in training is certainly nothing new, though Gustin is quick to draw a distinction

"I KNEW THAT THE SUIT WOULD MAKE THIS FEEL REAL"
GRANT GUSTIN

between his idea of hitting the gym and that of Stephen Amell, who plays Oliver Queen.

"It is nothing like what Stephen does," he laughs. "Stephen is out of his mind! I grew up dancing, which makes it a lot easier to pick up fight choreography and bring a fluidity to the role. I've always been pretty active, so I haven't had to make any drastic changes. I go to the gym, because I'd probably be 20 pounds lighter than I am right now if I didn't. It's just hard to try and fit it in with the schedule that I have."

Not so hard has been his ability to "fit in" to the character, his costume and what his being cast in the role means to him on a personal level.

"I knew that the suit would kind of be the thing that would make this feel real, because it is such an iconic thing," reflects Gustin. "And it's cool that it's so different than any suit that's ever existed. It was slowly pieced together on me, so in the fittings I never really felt dumb. When I saw pictures of myself in the suit, it's making me feel really cool. And this show is going to have its place in history. No matter what else happens with *The Flash* going forward, at least I've got this version of it. I couldn't be more honoured that I get to be the guy in the suit."

The Flash is airing now on Tuesday evenings at 8pm on Sky1.

Barry's imprisoned father is played by John Wesley Shipp, who played the Flash in the 1990 TV series.



Gustin insists that Barry needs his team, made up of Harrison Wells (Tom Cavanagh), Cisco Ramon (Carlos Valdes) and Caitlin Snow (Danielle Panabaker).





SET VISIT

Atlantis

RETURN TO ATLANTIS

AFTER THE LIGHT-HEARTED HIJINKS OF SERIES ONE, IT LOOKS LIKE THINGS ARE ABOUT TO GET SERIOUS, WITH ATLANTIS UNDER SIEGE AND BATTLE LINES DRAWN. WE TALK TO THE CAST ABOUT THE DARKER SECOND SERIES... WORDS ABIGAIL CHANDLER



THE MEDITERRANEAN SUN SHINES ON A QUIET STREET FILLED WITH RICKETY MARKET STALLS AND OLIVE TREES, SAND IS FILLING OUR SHOES, AND THERE'S A STRONG

smell of goat. Yet we're in a warehouse in Wales. It must be time for *Atlantis*.

"This street, you wouldn't recognise it," Hercules himself Mark Addy says, pointing to the sedate-looking set. "There was a barricade across it, an army coming through these gates, Atlanteans desperately trying to keep them at bay..."

He's talking about the Series Two opener, a thrilling siege that throws the audience right into the deep end of the obligatory 'darker' second series. And the reason for the siege? Atlantis has a new queen.

"Minos has died, and Ariadne has inherited the throne, so there is a new Queen who is under attack right from the word go," Addy continues, relaxing between takes. "We get a lot of her dirty work. We're the go-to guys for her. She is surrounded by enemies. There are people she can trust, and she'll stick with them."

One of those enemies is the banished Pasiphae (Sarah Parish), who will be joined by a host of co-conspirators, including new arrival Medea, the mythical wife of Jason, played by *Being Human*'s Amy Manson.

"There's sort of a connection between them," leading man Jack Donnelly says of Jason and Medea. "Medea in our story is very much an outsider. She doesn't really fit in anywhere, doesn't really know who she is, and she's sort of led to the dark side. Her and Jason find each other sort of as kindred spirits." But what about Jason (Donnelly) and Ariadne (Aiysha Hart)? "It does seem like she could potentially be a rival to Ariadne," Donnelly admits.

Jason isn't the only one with romantic drama in his life – Jemima Rooper's Medusa is back, and her and Hercules have unfinished business.

"I think there's lots of hope for them," Rooper says, "and that's what's been really lovely for them, but is also where the tragedy comes from." Rooper is without her Medusa prosthetic, but her tattered dress and liberal smearing of mud suggests that there's unlikely to be much hope in Medusa's life.

Perhaps all this doomed romance is the source of this bleaker second series, as the show will be broadcasting in the later-than-normal 8.30pm slot.

"Hopefully there'll be nothing too scary for younger viewers," Rooper says, although Addy says that they're likely to "lose some audience members, but we'll gain others".

"Some of the emotional stuff is pretty heavy this year," Rooper continues, "and it's great to be able to play that. And it's great that there's still humour and there's still fun."

So fans of fart jokes and comical nudity need not worry – *Atlantis* hasn't completely





SET VISIT

Atlantis

➤ thrown the baby out with the bath water. "I think you earn the humour more," says Robert Emms, who plays Pythagoras, "Because the serious situations are so serious and so dark that the humour really does lighten it in a good way."

Greek myths are famously dark, and yet they're enduringly popular with both children and adults. Just why do the cast think that myth – and the fantasy genre – is such a hit with fans?

"It's an escape from the world we're in now," Donnelly muses. "Technology the way it is, and what's on the news at the moment, you don't always want to see that reflected in art, and fantasy gives us a chance to escape that – a chance to explore the themes in a safer way."

Addy, however, thinks that the appeal is less about escaping from their world, and more about exploring a new one: "In a way part of the fun is learning what the rules are of Atlantis, or Westeros or whatever, there are rules about how these societies work, what's allowed, what isn't and why it isn't."

Fantasy and myth might be popular, but translating it to the screen is rife with challenges. As convincing as the sets are, there's only so much you can achieve in Wales. Production ups sticks and heads to Morocco every year to give the show that extra pizzazz it needs to convince people that Wales is ancient Greece.



Going to Morocco allows them to get "shots that give you a kind of scale that you can't achieve in here, even with all the green screen," says Addy. "It's amazing what they can do with sets that they build here. They can replicate that kind of harsh sunlight incredibly well, so when you cut from stuff that we know we shot in Morocco to something we know we shot here, it's really hard to see the join."

But it's not just the sets and locations that are required – a certain amount of action is expected in a rollicking fantasy show. While Rooper avoids action ("you should never be able to see yourself run on screen; it's not kind"), each of the three boys have their own style. While Emms describes Pythagoras' action style as simply "fighting for his life in a bit of a panic", and Addy has a new war hammer to play with, it's Donnelly who carries most of the action weight.

"Jack can string together 20 or 30 moves, and I can just about link four," Addy laughs. And yet rather than using the break between series' to get seriously buff, Donnelly admits to getting "back on the pizza."

Being the action guy means that Donnelly is also the cast member most likely to sustain injuries. "You could say I'm clumsy, but considering the amount of sword-fighting that we do, I actually think I'm rather accident-free," he says cheerily, his permanent smile widening. One thing to

be said of the cast of *Atlantis* – they all look deliriously happy to be there.

Their friendship spills over into real life. The three actors sit together at lunch, drop in on each other's interviews, and can be heard laughing together from just about anywhere in the vast set. The pranks they play on each other are legendary, and they spend just as much time together off set as on.

This friendship is the subject of much drama on screen too, with Emms teasing trouble ahead for the trio: "Later on in the series you do see the friendship being tested more, and there are some breaks in it. Which I think is really nice, because the audience in the first series invested so much in that trio... you can play with that and toy with the audience."

It's not all about the three leads, though, with Robert Lindsay returning as Daedalus. The show will also welcome new cast members like *In The Flesh*'s Emmett Scanlan, and Sian Thomas and Ronald Pickup as Orpheus and Eurydice, and we wouldn't bet against the long-teased Icharus (he of flew-too-close-to-the-Sun fame) appearing.

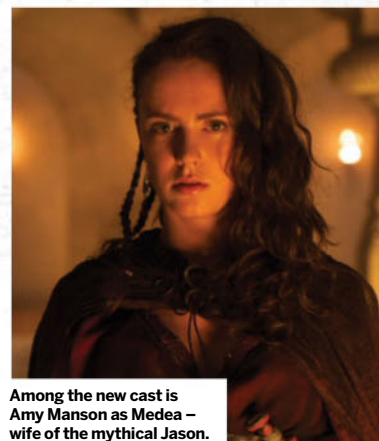
It looks like Series Two will achieve its goal of being bigger, darker and even better... 🍕

Atlantis: Series Two is airing now on Saturday evenings on BBC One.

The tone may be darker, but we doubt there'll be any lack of light-hearted capers.



“YOU SEE THEIR FRIENDSHIP BEING TESTED MORE, AND THERE ARE SOME BREAKS IN IT”
ROBERT EMMS



Among the new cast is Amy Manson as Medea – wife of the mythical Jason.



Jack Donnelly also reprises his role as man-out-of-time Jason.

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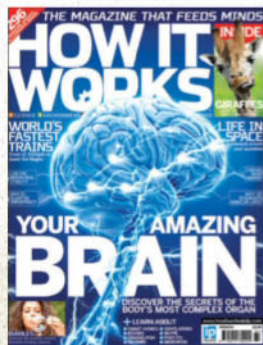
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STIME





KILLING

THE DIRECTORS AND STAR OF PREDESTINATION TELL US WHY TIME TRAVEL IS SO DIFFICULT, WHY PREDESTINATION IS UNLIKE ANYTHING ELSE, AND WHY YOU CAN'T TALK ABOUT PREDESTINATION

WORDS JONATHAN HATFULL INTERVIEWS MARK JUDDERY, JONATHAN HATFULL

TIME TRAVEL IS A TRICKY BUSINESS. NO MATTER HOW CLEARLY THE PROCESS IS EXPLAINED TO YOU, AND NO MATTER HOW CLEAR YOUR GOALS ARE, SOMETHING

will go wrong. Something or someone is going to send your best laid plans into total disarray and leave you scrambling to pick up the pieces. Nothing is simple.

Something else that's far from simple is telling people about *Predestination*. The new film from the Spierig brothers, based on the short story 'All You Zombies' by Robert A Heinlein and starring Ethan Hawke, Sarah Snook

and Noah Taylor, is really very good. It's daring and beautifully made – a labyrinthine journey through time that is best viewed with as little prior knowledge as possible. We'll endeavour to tell you why you need to see *Predestination* without wrecking it for you. How hard could that be?

"I don't envy that position!" laughs Snook, who delivers a star-making performance. "When we were shooting, we discussed how the trailer was going to be done – because how much do you give away, or not give away?"

The Spierigs previously made a strong impression with the stylish and ambitious vampire movie *Daybreakers*, which also starred Hawke. While there was plenty of bloodletting to be found, the film had a very strong sci-fi element, set in a future in which vampires had become the dominant species, only to find that their most important natural resource (that's us) was running out.

Predestination sees the brothers pursuing their interest in science fiction even further, creating an intricate time-travel tale that jumps from the Fifties ➤

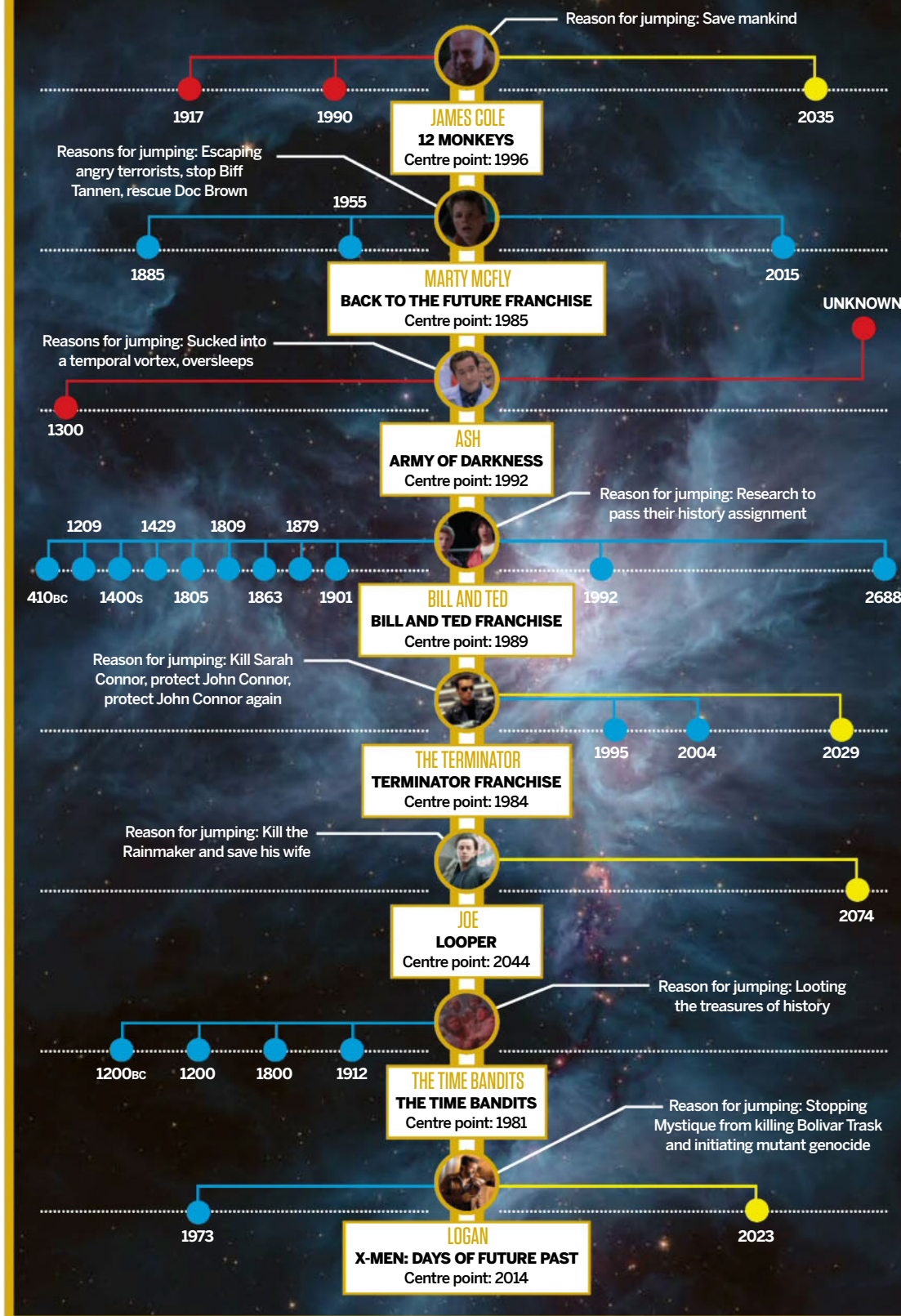


BIG MOVIE

Predestination

TIME AFTER TIME

TIME TRAVEL SHOULD BE SO EASY. YOU'VE GOT A MISSION: YOU GO BACK, AND YOU SORT IT. BUT SOMETHING ALWAYS GETS IN THE WAY...



to the Seventies to the early Nineties. "There's something about time travel that's so interesting," Peter Spierig tells us. "*Back To The Future* is unmistakably classic. I like all the Terry Gilliam stuff like *Time Bandits* and *12 Monkeys*, and the movie *Primer*, which I'm still trying to figure it out. *Looper* was a really good film. The idea of being able to travel backwards or forwards in time and change the future or the past is such an exciting concept, filled with lots of dilemmas and paradoxes. For a scriptwriter, trying to find out how it all works can drive you a little bit insane. It's a very complex thing to deal with as a story, but it can be so much fun."

The inspiration came from a short story by one of the genre's greats. While some details have been changed, as well as the title, Peter stresses that the source material was crucial. "What drew us in was Robert Heinlein. I had read a number of his short stories, and that one just stuck with me. Initially, when you read the title you think, 'Well, it's a zombie short story,' but it's obviously more of a metaphorical concept in this case. What drew us in was the quality of Heinlein's storytelling. What's good about a short story, as opposed to a novel, is that you're able to keep the framework for something and then expand upon it to make it a 110-page feature, whereas in a novel, what you tend to do is just extract the core and have to remove so much to make it work. If you have a really great short story, or a foundation for a feature based on the short story when you're able to expand it, that to Michael and I was a really exciting prospect."

The film opens with Ethan Hawke's Temporal Agent hunting through time for the Fizzle Bomber, a shadowy figure responsible for a series of devastating attacks. Hawke is reaching the end of his tenure, as there's only so many times you can time travel without serious damage being done to your brain. If he can just find the bomber at exactly the right time, he can complete his mission and retire in peace. Naturally, this being a time-travel story, it's not going to be that easy.

"It was unpredictable," recalls Snook. "To the point where at the end, I was like, 'Hang on... let me re-read that!' I like that kind of mental challenge. Getting out a pencil and marking out all the dates and times and making sure they're in the right spot and making sure I had the right gist of things."

"The interesting thing about Heinlein's short story is that so much of it is brilliantly constructed," adds Michael Spierig. "He only touched very basically on the temporal agency and the time-travel bureau. All that was very briefly touched upon in the short story, and we had a lot of fun expanding all that stuff. We wanted to see a little bit of what they actually do, and also we wanted to add thriller elements to the story."



Hawke's driven time-cop starts what he hopes will be the final mission of his career as a bartender while New York lives in fear of the bomber. There, he meets a bitter barfly with a hell of a tale to tell him. It's the story of Jane, an orphan who grows up to be an outcast child who becomes an independent young woman (Sarah Snook). It's a story of a person who was never truly in control of their own life, who never fit in, who fought for every break she ever got, only to find... well, that would be telling.



AS GREAT AS HAWKE IS, HOWEVER, THE REAL STAR OF PREDESTINATION IS SNOOK. HER PERFORMANCE IN THE FILM IS EYE-CATCHING FOR MANY REASONS, NOT

least of which is that she plays a man. Who that character is and why remain secret, but we can tell you that her performance is phenomenal. "Sarah just blew us away," Michael tells us. "We started seeing most of the young actresses in the country, and there was so much talent out there. She got just what we were looking for. She was so wonderful. You always get nervous when an actor who is relatively new works with someone so seasoned like Ethan, but they were just so great together."

"I didn't really know too much about it at all before beginning to audition, and I certainly hadn't come across the story off my own back beforehand," remembers Snook. "I weirdly found Jane harder to find as a character, which sounds bizarre, because you'd think being female it'd be easier to play female." For inspiration, she looked to other actresses who'd played men ("Definitely watching Tilda Swinton"), as well as other more direct sources. "I watched *Barfly*, the Mickey Rourke film, and then started reading more Charles Bukowski, also a book called *Down And Out* by Orson Welles. I don't smoke usually, but I spent nights in my hotel just rolling cigarettes to get used to that. And just the attitude of someone who was a barfly, there's a kind of indignance and a desperation, so it's kind of a funny line to play. I really did find watching *Barfly* useful for that, because he's got such a kind of anger and then innocence."

As shooting drew nearer, it was vital that both Snook and Hawke had a clear understanding of the film's chronology, at which point her co-star's experience both as an actor and a writer became extremely useful. "Yeah, we were doing rehearsals over the weekend with Michael, Peter and I and Ethan," Snook remembers. "Just the four of us, that was the most valuable time we had in pre-production, because it really was just us four in a room knocking out the script and making sure that there were no glaring holes. Quite a lot did change in

those meetings. It's great to be able to be a part of something that is work-shopping, and with someone who has been nominated for screenwriting working with you. Ethan had a really good way of making it better than the sum of its parts, with us working all together. Time travel's pretty nutty to make sure you're on the right chronology, so we really were going through it, making sure it worked!"

That nutty time-travel chronology would have been hard enough at the best of times, but Snook tells us that filming in sequence was out of the question. "What kind of sequence is there really in time travel? So we had to play with that because Ethan had to leave halfway through to go and release his film *Before Midnight* at the Tribeca Film Festival, so there was a week where he was gone during the middle of shooting, and I was flip-flopping between characters all the time. And then there were four days where we had to do both in one day!"

As you may have gathered, *Predestination* isn't your average time-travel film. It's thrilling and exciting, but it's also deeply moving and totally unpredictable. With so many of the movie's details being necessarily kept under wraps, Snook tells us that she's found her own way of getting people to go and see it. "It depends on who I'm talking to, but I tend to either go, 'Bells and whistles, look, I play a man, you'll have to watch it and see how and why', and then that's it. 'There's time travel involved and Ethan Hawke.' Or

I do, 'My character grew up as an orphan,' and I kind of truncate the first 50 minutes of the film and then say, 'And then the film begins! If you met the person who ruined your life, would you kill him?' Whichever one is worth more, I don't know, but I think the easier one is 'I play a man!'"

"What Michael and I are most proud of is, it's rare that you can go to a movie, especially these days, and just really see something different and unique," Peter tells



Sarah Snook is coy about the nature of her role.

TIME TRAVEL'S PRETTY NUTTY TO MAKE SURE YOU'RE ON THE RIGHT CHRONOLOGY, WE WERE MAKING SURE IT WORKED!
SARAH SNOOK

us. "We feel that *Predestination* is that film. It's something that's very different from any time-travel science fiction film you may have seen before, and I think it's a better viewing once you've seen it twice. And that's a rare thing. We're very proud of that. We wanted to do something that would really make the audience think and have a good time."

Predestination will be released in cinemas in early 2015.



Seasoned actor Hawke faces off with the camera.

Ethan Hawke stars as the Bartender, a man on his final mission.



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SciFiNow Reviews

Our thoughts on the pick
of the entertainment
releases out this month

★★★★★ Outstanding ★★★★★ Thoroughly entertaining ★★★ Good but somewhat lacking ★★ Fair at best ★ Avoid as you should *Leprechaun: Origins*

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76 INTERSTELLAR

"TAKES OFF WHEN ITS MISSION
DOES. ONCE THE FILM LEAVES
EARTH, IT'S JAW-DROPPING"

TRIVIA *INTERSTELLAR*'S WORKING TITLE WAS 'FLORA'S LETTER' - NAMED AFTER CHRISTOPHER NOLAN'S DAUGHTER.

FILM INFO

Released

Out now

Certificate

12A

Director

Christopher Nolan

Screenwriters

Jonathan Nolan,
Christopher Nolan

Cast

Matthew McConaughey,
Anne Hathaway, David
Gyasi, Jessica Chastain,
Michael Caine

Distributor

Warner Bros

Running Time

169 mins



INTERSTELLAR

Reach for the stars

SPACE PILOTS

Five fly-men and women we'd trust to get into space

Hoburn Wash in *Firefly*

Alan Tudyk's wisecracking pilot is a leaf on the wind. Watch how he soars.

Corporal Ferro in *Aliens*

This marine will get you on the ground in any conditions. In the pike, five by five.

Pilot in *Farscape*

Being biologically linked to the ship means that Pilot is arguably the most committed pilot on this list.

Tommy Webber in *Galaxy Quest*

He's a little rusty, but give him some time to practice and he'll be back to kid-genius level.

Steven Hiller in *Independence Day*

Will Smith welcomes extraterrestrials to Earth before flying a virus up their ship's jacksie.

Christopher Nolan films come with a burden of expectation, but with *Interstellar* it's a burden that is to a large extent self-imposed. This is a film presented as a tribute to the truly great science fiction films. It evokes *2001: A Space Odyssey* and *Close Encounters Of The Third Kind*, but it's not just a tribute; Nolan's clear aim is to create a film that can exist as part of that pantheon. It's a commendable goal, to be sure, but a damn lofty one.

A succession of devastating crop blights means that the human race is running out of food, while diminishing plant life causes oxygen to dwindle. Pilot turned farmer Cooper (Matthew McConaughey) is recruited by what's left of NASA for one last incredible mission.

Dr Brand (Michael Caine) and his team have located a wormhole leading to another galaxy with possibly habitable worlds. One-man missions were sent through to the different planets in the system, and three responded with the green light. Brand wants Cooper to fly

three scientists through the wormhole to provide conclusive proof, but will he ever be able to come back to his children?

Things get off to a leisurely start as Nolan makes it clear that he will not be rushed through his introduction to Coop, his family and the state of the world. It's a compelling and plausible scenario; technology can't help when the Earth can't sustain us any more. McConaughey is perfect as the family man who despairs at mankind's decision to grind through the motions in an attempt to get by.

Interstellar takes off when its mission does. Once the film leaves Earth, it's jaw-dropping. Combining the realism of *Gravity* with the scale of *2001* and *Alien*, Nolan, his effects team and cinematographer Hoyte van Hoytema have created an experience that is truly stunning. From frozen rocky wastes and flooded landscapes to the perception-bending wormhole, there can be no doubt that in terms of sheer visual accomplishments at least, it is outstanding.

However, there are cracks in the canvas. The deliberate pace serves the film well when building to a spectacle, but less so when a plot twist is signposted a mile off. Moreover, McConaughey is the only character who comes close to being fleshed out. We care about Anne Hathaway's Amelia because she makes sure we do,

but when the robots get more nuanced emotional moments, that's a problem, and it goes against the film's 'love transcends space and time' message.

That syrupy message is part of the film's problematic final third. At a certain point, the story starts regularly cutting between Cooper's journey and Jessica Chastain's character on Earth. As good as she is, it's hard to shake the impression that we've stumbled into a different film starring her roughly 20 minutes from the end. There's simply too much going on at this point, and it's here that heavy-handed emotional notes, combined with the intertwining plot threads, make the final third too rocky to stick the landing despite the visuals.

There's no denying that *Interstellar* is frequently awe-inspiring – see it on as big a screen if you can. We just wish that the script could have matched its five-star ambition, as it doesn't linger in the mind like *Inception*. It may well offer more rewards on repeat viewings, but *Interstellar* doesn't quite reach what it's grasping for.

Jonathan Hatfull
VERDICT ★★☆☆☆

OR STAY IN AND WATCH...



Sunshine

Danny Boyle's sci-fi yarn lacks the scale of *Interstellar*, but goes for the gut as well as the head.





THE BOOK OF LIFE A matter of life and death

Details PG // 95 mins // Out now **Director** Jorge R Gutierrez **Screenwriters** Jorge R Gutierrez, Douglas Langdale **Cast** Diego Luna, Zoe Saldana, Channing Tatum, Ron Perlman, Kate del Castillo, Ice Cube **Distributor** 20th Century Fox



Delivering something new for animated audiences can't be easy, so the fact that Jorge R Gutierrez's *The Book Of Life* feels

like such a breath of fresh air is a tremendous achievement. We were prepared for dazzling animation and beautiful artwork, but could it deliver the story and heart to go with its looks?

Sensitive Manolo is more interested in becoming a musician than going into the family tradition of bullfighting, while Joaquin is set on becoming a heroic warrior like his legendary father. They're also both madly in love with Maria.

La Muerte (Kate del Castillo), the ruler of the Land of the Remembered, and Xibalba (Ron Perlman), the ruler of The Land of the Forgotten, make a wager on who will be the one to win her heart. As adults, Manolo (Diego Luna) and Joaquin (Channing Tatum) are just as smitten with Maria (Zoe Saldana), but their rivalry ends up sending Manolo on a dangerous quest to the Land of the Dead.

We were expecting *The Book Of Life* to look amazing, and it doesn't disappoint. Gutierrez's designs for the Land of the Living are charming enough, with the characters resembling wooden figurines and

the town being full of charming idiosyncratic detail.

But where it really dazzles is in the Land of the Dead. The joyful world of the Remembered is rendered as a beautiful carnival, with intricate character design and a cavalcade of eye-catching minutiae, as well as being simply stunning on a grand scale. The Land of the Forgotten is chilling and highly effective.

However, the inclusion of new versions of pop songs means that some elements will date very quickly (although the cover of Radiohead's *Creep* came out of nowhere), while the comedy never really matches its commitment to depicting Mexican spirituality and telling a story about death with such honesty. The attempt at balance is understandable, but unsuccessful.

These are minor complaints, however. *The Book Of Life* is a beautifully made animation with excellent work from its voice cast. By making the dead as important as the living, it carves out an admirable niche for itself.

Jonathan Hatfull
VERDICT ★★☆☆

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...



The Nightmare Before Christmas
The King of Halloween Town discovers Christmas Town.



HORNS Taking the bull by the...

Details 15 // 120 mins // Out now **Director** Alexandre Aja **Screenwriter** Keith Bunin **Cast** Daniel Radcliffe, Juno Temple, Joe Anderson, Max Minghella **Distributor** Lionsgate



With director Alexandre Aja

trying to shake off his horror roots and Daniel Radcliffe still attempting to lose the boy-wizard tag, *Horns* has a lot riding on it. It mixes moments of broad comedy with horror, romance alongside religious iconography, and both condemns and condones violent retribution. At times, it seems to not quite know what it wants to be.

But when it hits upon something that works, it scores big. When murder suspect Ig (Radcliffe) first sprouts horns, a trip to the doctor's surgery takes a blackly hilarious look at the inconvenient side of compelling people to tell their deepest truths. Aja revels in this guilt-free distribution of poetic justice, with some gory and impressive set pieces. Radcliffe shines as both the bewildered, newly behorned Ig and the devilish persuader.

But where Radcliffe – and the film – falls down is in the turn towards a moral

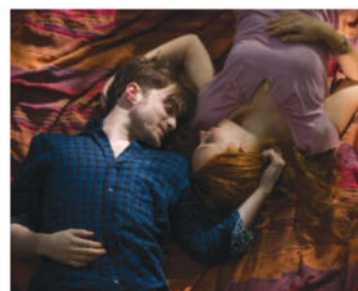
core. We see Ig grieve for girlfriend Merrin (Juno Temple), but there's little sense of his truly troubled soul. It is also entirely predictable, even for people who haven't read the book. There's not a single plot twist that isn't sign-posted half a mile back.

That said, *Horns* is enjoyable enough. It looks great, adopting a tone between magic realism and the Gothic. Ig's horns and costume combo are the stuff of a cosplayer's fantasy, and the cinematography is gorgeous. It sounds great too, with the soundtrack encompassing the likes of David Bowie to Marilyn Manson.

Temple is underused but luminous, while Radcliffe continues to grow as an actor, and makes for a charismatic and easy-to-root-for leading man. A special mention should go to Joe Anderson, who plays Ig's brother Terry, and turns in a brilliant performance wrought with inner turmoil – which admittedly might have been better suited to Ig.

Ultimately, *Horns* gets slightly lost, finding itself at an overly convenient ending, but along the way it has a lot of fun – and makes room for pathos, too.

Abigail Chandler
VERDICT ★★☆☆



IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...



Dogma
Fallen angels Loki and Bartleby must be stopped from re-entering heaven at all costs.



MONSTERS: DARK CONTINENT

War is monstrous

Details 15 // 123 mins // TBC 2015 **Director** Tom Green **Screenwriters** Tom Green, Jay Basu **Cast** Johnny Harris, Sam Keeley, Joe Dempsie, Kyle Soller **Distributor** Vertigo

First-time filmmaker Tom Green is given the opportunity to make an impression on the film world with a sequel to Gareth Edwards' remarkable debut *Monsters*. *Monsters: Dark Continent* is set ten years after the first film, with the bioluminescent creatures having evolved in both name – now being referred to as MTRs – and appearance; there are new roaming wildebeast-like versions alongside the tentacled aliens seen previously. The plot sees a group of soldiers sent on a mission to the Middle East to locate four missing comrades, providing scope for Green to explore interesting ideas concerning media bias and loss of humanity, yet these threads are never satisfactorily investigated. The human story is, again, at the centre of things, with Green focusing on the emotional journey of newbie Michael (Tom Keeley) as his eyes are opened to the horrors of war, and troubled veteran Noah (Johnny

Harris), who has become desensitised to violence. Harris's committed performance convinces, but Keeley's monotonous internal monologue grates. Green's film doesn't start well either, and his attempts to flesh out his young protagonist prove to be jarring. The decay of Detroit is home to Michael and his band of brothers, and Green candidly displays their limited work options. But a scene that serves to highlight their debauched behaviour just doesn't sit right. Ultimately, this never reaches the heights of its predecessor. Imitating the action of the likes of *Zero Dark Thirty* and *The Hurt Locker* brings with it a sense of déjà vu that dulls the brutality, and a jumbled screenplay which also borrows from greater films proves to be an arduous slog. Green has a knack of framing exquisite landscape shots, and creates both stunning and gruesome spectacle in bursts. But ultimately the mishandling of the narrative results in little investment in the characters, and the unfocused introduction distracts from the poignancy of the final throes.

Katherine McLaughlin
VERDICT ★★☆☆☆

OR STAY IN AND WATCH...



Godzilla
Director Gareth Edwards successfully applies his own style to the king of the kaiju.



SONG OF THE SEA

Somewhere beyond the sea a magical seal stands on a golden sand

Details TBC // 93 mins // TBC 2015 **Director** Tomm Moore **Screenwriter** Will Collins **Cast** David Rawle, Brendan Gleeson, Fionnula Flanagan, Lucy O'Connell **Distributor** Studio Canal



Illustrator and co-founder of Cartoon Saloon, Tomm Moore, delivers some more marvellously intricate hand-painted 2D animation in his second feature film after the Oscar-nominated *The Secret Of Kells*. Moore's original idea, which takes inspiration from the mythological Selkies – magical beings who are seals in the sea and become human on land – of Irish folklore, plays out on a visually imaginative palette that is bursting with Celtic imagery.

Just as Dorothy disappeared into her imagination in *The Wizard Of Oz* to deal with her fears, so too does Ben (David Rawle), who is forced to come to terms with the death of his mother and face the responsibility of looking after his younger sister Saoirse. When granny comes to visit she decides it's too dangerous for the children to continue to live in a lighthouse with their grieving father (Brendan Gleeson) and takes them to the city. Ben starts the long journey home on Halloween night, and grudgingly takes his sister with him.

Superbly realised sea-scapes generate both an immersive tranquillity and perilous playground

that cannily sidles in the idea that the sea can be friend and foe. The gorgeously detailed and patterned background of forests and caves that the children toil through are infused with a sparkle of magic, which brings to mind the work of artist Paul Klee, and the unique cultural angle sets this film apart from so much other modern animation. It also features stone trolls who inhabit an underground lair, with a door inscribed 'Feic uí' clearly marking out its Irish roots and adding a dash of humour for adults.

Moore imbues a warm sensibility and honesty to this fantasy adventure that doesn't shy away from its serious themes, but doesn't quite match the darkness of his previous feature. Just like the young wayward travellers lose their way, this film gets a little lost too, but it finds its feet again with a bittersweet ending that delivers a commendable message about the importance of family.

Katherine McLaughlin
VERDICT ★★★★★

OR STAY IN AND WATCH...



Coraline
Dark and daring 3D stop-motion animation expertly adapted for the screen from Neil Gaiman's novella.

OUIJA

Fatally dull

Details 15 // 89 mins // **Released** Out now **Director** Stiles White **Screenwriters** Juliet Snowden, Stiles White **Cast** Olivia Cooke, Ana Coto **Distributor** Universal



A supernatural horror brought to you by Michael Bay and Hasbro and released just in time for Halloween proves just as soulless as you might imagine it to be. *Ouija* is Stiles White's directorial debut feature, and it's a deathly dull, repetitive and highly derivative effort.

Olivia Cooke of *Bates Motel* fame stars as young Laine Morris, struggling to come to terms with the death of her best friend Debbie who was found hanging from her fairy lights at the start of the film in an apparent suicide. When Laine attempts to contact Debbie via Ouija board, along with her group of close-knit friends and

younger sister Sarah (Ana Coto), they unwittingly make contact with an evil spirit.

One of the ways in which *Ouija* falls short is how it borrows elements from classic horror films, but fails to use them effectively. One of its inspirations is Edward Sutherland's 1933 horror classic *Murders In The Zoo*, which opens with the vision of a man with his mouth sewn shut, to extremely unnerving effect.

This image has been used across many horror films to the same shocking degree, but in *Ouija* the insistence on using it repetitively greatly lessens the impact.

Writing team Juliet Snowden and Stiles White have come up with the not-so-scary phrase, 'Hi Friend' to



mark the arrival of an evil presence, and as a plot device it's laughable. Whether it's etched on a desk or drawn on the condensation of a car window, it fails to ever be ominous.

Even the appearance of a wheelchair-bound Lin Shaye as a mental patient and mediumship expert can't channel anything unsettling or even remotely fun due to the po-faced script, which moves from one uninspired kill to another with little momentum.

While White occasionally delivers tense moments, he has also made a Ouija board film worse than Kevin Tenney's *Witchboard*. Here's hoping it doesn't spawn any sequels.

Katherine McLaughlin
VERDICT ★★☆☆

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...



Oculus
Karen Gillan tries to prove that something supernatural framed her brother for murder.

WIN! A PANASONIC HD CAMCORDER WITH THE REMAINING!



Apocalyptic events and wedding vows collide in terrifying supernatural thriller *The Remaining*, which is in UK cinemas now

Based on Biblical accounts of the end of the world, *The Remaining* explores faith and redemption during apocalyptic chaos, with horrific circumstances.

Written and directed by Casey La Scala (*Donnie Darko*), *The Remaining* features an incredible up and coming cast of fresh young talent, including Johnny Pacar (*Wild Child*), Alex PenaVega (*Sin City: A Dame To Kill For*), Shaun Sipos (*Texas Chainsaw 3D*) and Italia Ricci (*Don John*).

To celebrate the film's release, we're giving one lucky reader the chance to win a Panasonic HC-V250EB-K Full HD Camcorder.

To be in with a chance of winning, simply answer the following question:

ON WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING FILMS DID CASEY LA SCALA WORK AS AN EXECUTIVE PRODUCER?

- a) Donnie Darko
- b) Ronnie Marco
- c) Johnnie Parker



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THE TEXAS CHAIN SAW MASSACRE: 40TH ANNIVERSARY RESTORATION

See Now
Must see now!

Don't mess with Texas

Details 18 // 83 mins // 1972 // **Released** Out now **Director** Tobe Hooper
Cast Marilyn Burns, Paul A Partain, Edwin Neal, Jim Siedow, Gunnar Hansen, Teri McMinn
Distributor Second Sight



40 years on, and Tobe Hooper's lo-fi exploitation classic *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* is as raw and as real as an

open wound.

It's still impossible to take this film as a whole. Instead, it's a rush of images that settle in the memory like trauma. That first kill is still shocking, even though you know it's coming – the juddering clang of the steel door breaking the silence, and the animalistic spasm of the dying Kirk (William Vail) felled by two savage blows from a hammer. It's a callback to the discussion with the leery hitchhiker (Edwin Neal) in the van earlier.

"The old way," he trills gleefully, "with a sledge! You see, that way's better. They die better that way."

Everything is a callback, and no moment is wasted. It's what makes it so infinitely rewatchable. The barbecue, the slaughterhouse, the grave-robbing, the drunk, the cars under the camouflage netting, the bone art and the wooden folk magic charms. HBO's *True Detective* would have been a very different show were it not for Hooper's grisly classic

and its cannibalistic gumbo of Southern Gothic and grindhouse gristle.

Newly released on a two-disc Blu-ray with an all-new 4K 40th Anniversary restoration and bundled with a staggering volume of extras (so many, in fact, that they're bordering on redundant, with various archive documentaries tripping over each other to offer tours of the original house and spoofs of the original opening crawl). The disquieting veracity of *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* blooms under the scrutiny of its higher definition – more real and fascinating than ever before.

While many of its late exploitation/early slasher peers have grown either more cartoonish or more dowdy with age, Hooper's grim conviction, use of authentic locations and unflinchingly visceral detail has armoured the movie against the passage of time.

James Hoare
VERDICT ★★★★★

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...



The Hills Have Eyes
Alexandre Aja's remake turns redneck horror into a high-stakes rollercoaster.

THE PURGE: ANARCHY

Escape from LA

Details 15 // 103 mins // 2014 // **Released** Out now
Director James DeMonaco **Cast** Frank Grillo, Carmen Ejogo, Zach Gilford, Kiele Sanchez, Michael K Williams **Distributor** Universal Pictures



The sequel may have emerged suspiciously quickly, but just as quickly those suspicious dissipate

like day-trippers before the Purge Night klaxon. Drawing closer to his John Carpenter influences, director James DeMonaco drops the horror altogether for a more classically inclined action thriller against the backdrop of a poisoned utopia.

The budget is three times that of the first film's lean \$3 million, but it feels ten times higher, with gorgeous sweeping panoramas of deserted streets and headlamps gliding down empty highways, and wonderful incidental colour.

Frank Grillo is absolutely captivating in his brooding physicality – half nameless Western gunslinger, half Frank

Castle. The rest of the cast: not so much, with Zach Gilford and Kiele Sanchez coming straight from the cliché casting as Middle Class White Couple In Peril, while Carmen Ejogo is better in terms of her meaty role and her nuanced delivery, her character is similarly shackled by stereotype as Hard-Working Latina Single Mom.

James Hoare
VERDICT ★★★★★



THE EXORCIST: 40 ANNIVERSARY EDITION

Cash it out

Details 18 // 117 mins // 1973 // **Released** Out now
Director William Friedkin **Cast** Ellen Burstyn, Max von Sydow, Jason Miller, Lee J Cobb, Jack MacGowran **Distributor** Warner Home Video



There's the deft, 1974 theatrical cut, the 1998 director's cut (the one with the daft spider-walk and loads of lovely incidental tension), the 2000 theatrical version of the director's cut and with the 40th anniversary now upon us, we must be looking at a bloated *Blade Runner*-style super-director's cut? No, not at all.

Oh, well, surely there's some massive new behind-the-scenes gubbins to pour over? Not really; there's a slightly indulgent bit of BBC4-style filler with author William Peter Blatty revisiting the desk he wrote the book at and reading some of his favourite chapters aloud like an evangelical edition of *Jackanory*.

The only other new feature is a rather dry documentary on the 'real' possession that inspired the movie.

"He will lie to confuse us," observed Father Merrin. "But he will also mix lies with the truth to attack us." Basically, this is the 2010 Blu-ray release with a sticker on it.

James Hoare
VERDICT ★★★★★



The Texas Chain Saw Massacre // The Purge: Anarchy // The Exorcist // Guardians Of The Galaxy // X-Men: Days Of Future Past

GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY



Hooked on a franchise

Details 12 // 121 mins // 2014 // **Released** 24 November **Director** James Gunn **Cast** Chris Pratt, Zoe Saldana, Dave Bautista, Vin Diesel, Bradley Cooper, Lee Pace, Michael Rooker **Distributor** Walt Disney Studios Home Entertainment



Sometimes, the hype surrounding a huge new film can leave you feeling a little dubious, like there's no point in forming expectations because it won't live up to them. But sometimes, the film rolls up on opening weekend and completely bowls you over. Everything you were hoping it would be, it is, and a little more. *Guardians Of The Galaxy* is one of those films.

It's not an emotionally charged spectacle of a film, and doesn't dissect the human condition or the psyche of a killer or even make you think that much; it's just really, really fun. So much so that it's almost impossible not to have a good time with it.

One thing to love about *Guardians* is the soundtrack. All the tracks on the mix tape that plays throughout the film

have been lovingly selected to match each scene perfectly, laying down funky beats that make it difficult to sit still on your sofa. That's not forgetting the script itself, however, which packs a fun and action-packed story, with the dialogue between the leads remaining consistently hilarious.

Which brings us to the characters themselves. Two hours isn't much time in which to introduce five brand new heroes, as well as an ensemble of villains, but they still manage to be not only well-developed and memorable but iconic. By the time the two hours have passed and the credits roll, they have worked their way under your skin and into your bloodstream, and suddenly you're in bed in your pants, clutching your bank card and wondering why you ordered Star Lord's mask and a dancing



Groot bobble head off the internet at 1am.

From a financial point of view, risks don't really exist; if a film has 'Marvel' stamped across the poster, people are going to go and see it. Most of the general movie-going public had never heard of *Guardians* before the hype started with that trailer at the beginning of the year, but a huge portion went to see it. There was no way *Guardians*

could have flopped, but it could have left a bitter aftertaste. Instead, they knocked it out of the stratosphere.

Poppy-Jay Palmer
VERDICT ★★★★★

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...



Parks And Recreation
Not genre but hilarious, and features Chris Pratt killing it as an even bigger dork than Star Lord.

X-MEN: DAYS OF FUTURE PAST



Back to basics

Details 12 // 131 mins // 2014 // **Released** Out now **Director** Bryan Singer **Cast** Hugh Jackman, James McAvoy, Michael Fassbender, Jennifer Lawrence, Nicholas Hoult **Distributor** 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment



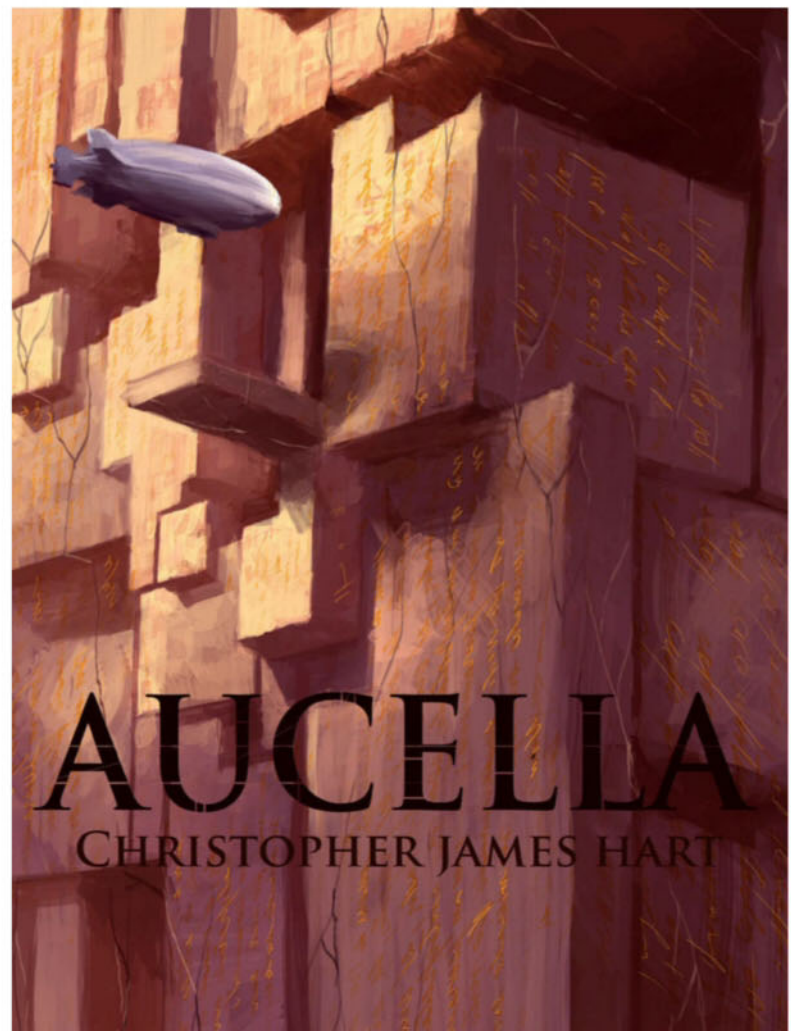
Social media has changed movie-making. With immediate access to their favourite filmmakers, it's easier than ever for fans to make their voices heard.

X-Men: Days Of Future Past is perhaps the film that highlights this new propensity the best. Based on

one of the Children of the Atom's most classic storylines, it effectively functions as a mass deck-clearing exercise, combining the worlds of Fox's two sets of *X-Men* film series, and in one fell swoop forever undoing the franchise's most heinous mistakes.

That it also manages to be fun and exhilarating is a nice little bonus. With excellent performances all round, most notably from Jennifer Lawrence as Mystique and James McAvoy as a young Charles Xavier (not forgetting the year's scene-stealer, Evan Peters' Quicksilver), we look forward to seeing what comes next, with the franchise looking to expand into *X-Men: Apocalypse* in 2016, now the slate has been wiped clean.

Steve Wright
VERDICT ★★★★★



THE VISITOR

Oh my Lord

Details 15 // 97 mins // 1979 // **Released** Out now **Director** Giulio Paradisi **Cast** Lance Henriksen, John Huston, Mel Ferrer, Shelley Winters **Distributor** Arrow Video



Sometimes, you come across a film that proves to be truly baffling. "What is this about?" "How did this get made?" "Do I like this or not?" Giulio

Paradisi's *The Visitor* falls into this category, challenging us on so many levels that we don't know what's artistry and what's incompetence.

A mash-up of other successful films from that time period, it lifts from *The Exorcist*, *The Omen* and the sequels to both of those films. It also tries to combine the scope and sentimentality of *Close Encounters* with the eye-popping



visuals of Alejandro Jodorowsky. In short, it's a big mad genre stew.

An ancient spirit has been born in the body of young Katy Collins (Paige Conner), and the forces of good and evil want her. Wealthy Raymond Armstead (Lance Henriksen) is in a relationship with Katy's mother Barbara (Joanne Nail), and is trying to get her pregnant on the orders of an evil group so she can give birth to an equally powerful son. Kindly exorcist/angel Jerzy Colsowicz (John Huston) is dispatched from Heaven by Jesus (Franco Nero) to make sure the bad guys don't get their way.

From the vision of Nero as a blonde Jesus to a detective being brutally attacked by a bird of prey in his car, to an eight-year old child choreographing carnage on an ice rink, *The Visitor* is a collection of sequences that don't make a lick of sense. Until about halfway, it's relatively easy to keep a handle on the storyline, as Henriksen tries to get his marriage plot going and evil Katy goes about her Damien/Regan business.



However, it's all completely nonsensical and utterly ludicrous, as Huston ambles about on rooftops with his bald henchmen, beckoning to the sky for celestial guidance. When his character finally meets Shelley Winters' tells-it-like-it-is housemaid, the sense of deep-set silliness is just too much. This is a visually stunning curio that should be approached with extreme caution.

The extras include three excellent interviews with the writer, cinematographer, and a fantastically

frank Henriksen, who remembers being profoundly embarrassed by the finished product. "Bring a seatbelt," he advises the first-time viewer. "Because you're going to want to leave." And yet you won't be able to tear your eyes off it.

Jonathan Hatfull
VERDICT ★★☆☆

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...



Santa Sangre
Want Jodorowsky visuals in a film that's actually great? Watch the master's superb 1989 classic.

DEBUG

Momoa ex machina

Details 15 // 90 mins // 2014 // **Released** Out now **Director** David Hewlett **Cast** Jeananne Goossen, Jason Momoa, Adrian Holmes **Distributor** Signature Entertainment



Genre fans may recognise David Hewlett from his roles in front of the camera in things like *Stargate Atlantis*, but he's stepped behind it as writer and director of this story of a ship's AI system run amok.

A group of convicted hackers arrive on a former prison ship to decommission the operating system. As these young offenders slowly get to it, it soon becomes apparent that the OS isn't going down without a fight. It's been studying the inmates, learning from them, and it's going to turn its expertise against these intruders.

Debug is an extremely polished low-budget sci-fi, and Hewlett's love for the genre is apparent. However, it's all a little predictable. There's a point where it looks like it will tip into *Event Horizon* territory, but the

film steers clear of horror for a sci-fi thriller that's competent enough, but not particularly thrilling. There are some decent performances – although Momoa's hammy turn as the evil AI is not one of them – and some strong moments, but as a whole it's largely forgettable.

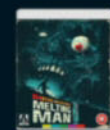
Jonathan Hatfull
VERDICT ★★☆☆



THE INCREDIBLE MELTING MAN

Drips and drabs

Details 18 // 85 mins // 1977 // **Released** Out now **Director** William Sachs **Cast** Alex Rebar, Burr DeBenning, Myron Healey **Distributor** Arrow Films



This gloriously gooey but decidedly messy horror from 1977 makes its hi-def debut, which is good news for fans of Rick Baker. His work is fantastic, as astronaut Steve West returns from a mission to Saturn and begins rapidly falling apart. Each appearance of the character is a stomach-turning delight and Baker's dripping, gruesome grue looks brilliant in HD.

As for the rest of the film – well, it's a bit of a state. The script is incredibly ropey and the acting is shocking. Burr DeBenning's turn as the easily hurt Dr Ted Nelson is like something out of *Garth Marenghi's Darkplace*, right down to taking offence when the General hangs up without saying goodbye. Writer/

director William Sachs claims that he intentionally made a horror comedy in the bonus interviews.

There's enough gory fun for B-movie fans after a hi-def curio, but after a little while general sloppiness all gets a bit much. Spotting a young Jonathan Demme among the cast is a highlight, though.

Jonathan Hatfull
VERDICT ★★☆☆



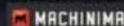
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Season One

SLEEPY HOLLOW

Sleeper hit

Details 15 // 585 mins // // Out now **Creators** Alex Kurtzman, Roberto Orci, Phillip Iscove, Len Wiseman **Cast** Tom Mison, Nicole Beharie, Orlando Jones, Katia Winter **Distributor** 20th Century Fox



Sleepy Hollow should not have worked. An update of Washington Irving's tale? With Ichabod Crane somehow in our time?

And it's a cop show? Sometimes, however, these things surprise you.

The pilot episode throws us headlong into the battle in 1781 where Crane (Tom Mison) squares off with his nemesis before being mortally wounded. His wife Katrina (Katia Winter), who is also a witch, puts him into hibernation, tying his fate to that of the Headless Horseman, so when that decapitated demon comes back to wreak havoc in our time, he wakes up.

Working with Detective Abbie Mills (Nicole Beharie), Crane is finally able to convince some of the local police that something wicked this way comes. Can they stop the Horseman before all hell breaks loose?

There's a lot of really excellent work from the cast, creators and directors that we don't want to diminish, but the show's gleeful silliness works in tandem with that

to create a really wonderful piece of escapism. The wheels could fall off so quickly if there wasn't the sense that everyone involved was trying to make something that was, above all else, fun. It's very funny, there's great action, and it's frequently very scary.

The writers' inspirations are clearly a mix of *Indiana Jones* and *The X-Files*, and the combination of puzzle-solving mystery and full-blooded monster horror makes for a tremendously entertaining mix.

Then there's the cast. Mison is absolutely note-perfect as the man out of time, nailing each hilarious throw-away line while convincingly portraying his inner torment over his search for his wife. Beharie finds the humour in her no-nonsense cop to make her a fully rounded character beyond the typical 'audience identification point', and she's not a Scully-style sceptic.

With strong support from Orlando Jones, Lyndie Greenwood, John Cho and John Noble, *Sleepy Hollow's* first season is a hugely entertaining joy that gives us tree demons and George Washington's corpse. Get hooked now.

Jonathan Hatfull
VERDICT ★★★★★

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...



Fringe
At its peak, *Fringe* was a terrific heir to *The X-Files*, and John Noble is great in both.



Season Seven

TRUE BLOOD

III Bill

Details 18 // 600 mins // // Out now **Creator** Brian Buckner **Cast** Anna Paquin, Stephen Moyer, Alexander Skarsgård, Kristin Bauer van Straten **Distributor** Warner Home Video



Batshit bonkers and unbelievably sexy – that's how *True Blood* should be remembered. You'd better stop watching around

Season Four then, because the last ever outing was predictable and dull. Last season's shockers were dusted off and trundled out again so that no one was surprised by Jason (Ryan Kwanten)'s homoerotic fantasy featuring everyone's favourite blonde bloodsucker.

Indeed, the most surprising bits of the season were the huge disservices to some of the show's oldest characters. One death scene didn't even take place on screen, and the other was at the hands of a complete nobody. As if to add further insult, mourning was kept to a minimum, especially when you consider Season Six's farewell to part-timer Terry where there was a (really long) funeral, several heartfelt speeches and a pot roast.

Without a big bad to fight against, this year lacks direction. The story just continues with the after effects of Governor Burrell (Arliss Howard) and Sarah Newlin (Anna Camp)'s

vampire-killing virus, Hep V. It has turned the infected into mindless murderers, and the opening scenes are akin to something out of *The Walking Dead*. The residents end up blaming Sookie, and the rest of the season becomes a lesson in how to tie up loose ends as quickly – if not plausibly – as possible, either via ghosts, awful decisions or other contrived circumstances.

As ever, the best scenes star the king and queen of Fangtasia. Pam's journey to find her maker sees her playing Russian roulette and spouting some of the best lines ("Your god and my god can go to a motel and have a circle jerk for all I care"), and Team Ginger (Tara Buck) will be high-fiving when Eric (Skarsgård) finally makes good on his promise, but the climax of the show isn't nearly as satisfying.

The show's closing moments were loaded with as many sugary calories as the books it was based on. A much better farewell is the DVD extra that documents the final days on set through the eyes of the cast, who you feel genuinely loved the show the way we did once.

Jodie Tyley
VERDICT ★★☆☆☆

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...



The Originals
The sexier spin-off to *The Vampire Diaries* has plenty of juicy plot threads, as well as eye candy.



WITCHES OF EAST END

Bubble bubble family trouble

Details 12 // 398 mins // 2013 // **iTunes** // **Released** Out now

Creator Maggie Friedman **Cast** Julia Ormond, Mädchen Amick, Jenna Dewan-Tatum, Rachel Boston **Distributor** 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment



Episode one of *Witches Of East End* opens with an engagement party. It's a splendid affair. The venue, a large manor on the outskirts of East End,

is filled with flowers, vol-au-vents and well-dressed guests. The bride-to-be is betrothed to the man of her dreams, a dashing, filthy rich and handsome doctor.

Outside, an elderly couple are attacked and the husband brutally murdered by a powerful shape shifter, leaving nothing but a corpse and a satanic symbol in the grass. Both events set the tone for the rest of the series. Weddings, babies and love triangles are interwoven with possession, murder and being burnt at the stake.

Joanna Beauchamp (Julia Ormond), a beautiful middle-aged witch living in the suburbs with her two equally stunning daughters, Freya (Jenna Dewan-Tatum)

and Ingrid (Rachel Boston), who are also both (unknowingly) witches. They live a charmed life – until Joanna's half-witch half-cat estranged sister Wendy (Mädchen Amick) drops by one day to warn the family that they are all in grave danger. From there, Joanna's daughters discover their powers, past lives, past deaths and their mother's immortality, and the four women encounter non-stop trials and tribulations for the next nine episodes.

Witches Of East End is fairly superficial and kind of cheesy at times, but it's a good cheese, like a nutty, extra-mature cheddar. The characters are likeable, and as a result easy to root for. Their storylines are also really engaging, making the whole thing like a big soap opera with heart and magic.

It's not likely to rake in mounds out awards – if it did it would probably down to blackmail or witchcraft. But it's often surprising, witty and, most importantly



of all, heaps of supernatural fun. The Beauchamps and their witchy antics sit slap-bang in the interception of a 'guilty' and 'pleasure' Venn diagram. The occult has never been more fabulous.

Poppy-Jay Palmer

VERDICT ★★☆☆

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...



The Vampire Diaries

Supernatural dramas with love triangles involving a brunette and brothers don't get better than this.



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Harry Potter



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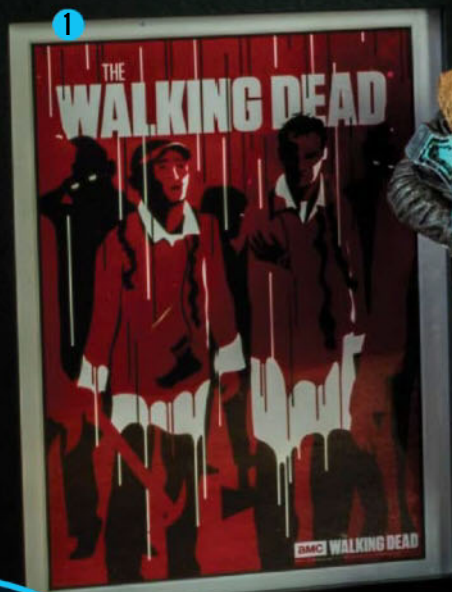
TOYS // COLLECTABLES //

1 The Walking Dead Guts Framed Collectors Print

Have you ever thought that your house just doesn't have enough zombie-themed art-deco prints? Are you embarrassed by your tame doilies and potpourri when guest come to stay? What your house needs is a *Guts Framed Collectors Print*. Brighten up any room with this stylish and minimalist print of Glenn and Rick wearing zombie guts in the rain.

Bay-57.net // £7.99

PERFECT FOR: FANS OF BLOOD
AND GUTS



2 Daryl Dixon Limited Edition ten-inch Deluxe Figure

This ten-inch limited edition Daryl Dixon figure, complete with crossbow, arrows, poncho and hunting knife, is the perfect finishing touch to any Norman Reedus shrine. Set out candles and incense around the figurine and burn a mixture of lobelia, blue skullcap and mugwort leaves to summon the Dark Lord Reedus (candles, incense and leaves not included).

Bay-57.net // £29.99

PERFECT FOR: NORMAN REEDUS FANS



3 The Walking Dead Minimates Series 5 – Tyreese & Prison Michonne

With 14 points of articulation each, these comic-book Tyreese and Prison Michonne action figures will bring the fun – all you need is enthusiasm! Move their arms! Bend their elbows! Turn their heads! Move their legs to pretend like they are walking! Bend their knees! Put their hands in the air like they just don't care!

Bay-57.net // £7.99

PERFECT FOR: MICHONNE FANS



4 Boba Fett Candy Bowl Holder

Impress party guests with this charming Boba Fett candy bowl holder. Unfortunately, he is hollow inside and doesn't have a back half, so he will never be able to replace the real Boba, but his hollowness does provide more room to hide sweets. Alternatively, you could mount him on a wall and use his tiny hands to hang your coat up.

Bay-57.net // £49.99

PERFECT FOR: SUGAR-ADDICTED STAR WARS FANS

5 True Blood Pop! Television Figurines

If you've ever pondered that your desk could do with some kind of Sookie Stackhouse bobble head to brighten it up, or your toilet cistern has been looking bare without a Lafayette Reynolds bobble head, or a Bill Compton bobble head would be just the thing for your mantelpiece to show off to your house guests then today is your lucky day! Forbiddenplanet.co.uk // £8.99 each

PERFECT FOR: BOBBLE HEAD COLLECTORS

6 Wrong People Official T-shirt

When the zombie apocalypse finally arrives, when you are beaten down and worn out and dying, when you've lost everyone you love and everyone you once knew, when you are captured by cannibals with no chance of escape, just point to the text on your chest so that everyone knows they are screwing with the wrong people.

Bay-57.net // £16.99

PERFECT FOR: SURVIVORS OF THE APOCALYPSE

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It's the clash of the titans, and every fisherman's worst nightmare. **£17.51**



ZOMBIE 15

Publisher: iello // Players: 2-4 // RRP: £39.99

Kickstarter has quickly become a big success story for many board game publishers, with new games constantly debuting on the crowd-funding service. *Zombie 15* is the latest to arrive, and it's every bit as good as promised.

Zombie 15 is a co-operative board game that takes place in an apocalyptic California, where everyone over the age of 18 has turned into a zombie. It is refreshing compared to many of the other zombie games on the market, and is complemented by some equally refreshing gameplay mechanics.

The story of *Zombie 15* plays out across 15 scenarios, each of which must be completed in less than 15 minutes. While many of them will simply require you to fight your way across the modular game board, others are more specific, such as requiring you to gather a certain amount of gas cans to refill your car.

Each player has four actions available to them that range from searching houses for extra weapons and items to fighting zombies or moving to the next area of the well-constructed board. Zombies stop players from searching or moving, so must be dealt with as quickly

1 HORDE BOX

It starts with three zombies. More are added if the weapon you use to kill zombies makes a noise.

2 BOARD

The modular game board consists of 32 double-sided pieces, allowing for all manner of configurations.

3 WEAPON CARDS

There's a huge amount of weapons to discover, from bows to rocket launchers. The quieter ones are weaker, but keep the zombie horde.

4 CD

The included CD is not as dramatic as we'd like, but it does include three different soundtracks.

6 TOKENS

Tokens are used to either mark your diminishing health or show the wear of your weapons.

5 MARKERS

Markers have a variety of uses. Some depict the exit, while others show specific objects you need to collect.

6 CHARACTER CARDS

Character cards typically have spaces for holding up to two weapons and one light object, and can be used to keep track of your life points and search tokens. Each character also has unique abilities.

8 CHARACTERS

The models are very well detailed and come in different colours, making them easy to tell apart.

as possible. Fortunately, combat itself is extremely straightforward.

Each weapon has three numbers on the right-hand side. The top tells you how many zombies it kills, the middle is how many zombies you can defend against, while the bottom number reveals how many new zombies you attract. Any zombies attracted by your weapon's noise are added to the Horde Box. When your turn ends, if the number of remaining zombies is equal to or less than your weapon then you can hold them off.

Searching is also well handled. A quick search lets you take the top three cards from the Search Pile, while a slow search lets you go through the available discard pile. Each card must be chosen and deliberated in turn, which ensures a better item, but takes up more time.

Zombie 15's atmosphere is provided by a CD, containing three different soundtracks. Every time you hear a zombie moan you draw a card from the Zombie Deck and place that many figures on the active players' square. Draw the horde and every monster from the Horde Box is added to the fray.

Zombie 15 is tough, but it's also well-paced and exceptional fun to play. Highly recommended to zombie veterans.

BEST FOR: FANS OF CO-OPERATIVE PLAY

9 ZOMBIE DECK

When you hear a zombie moan, turn over the top card. The number dictates how many zombies will be added to the area of the active player.

10 ZOMBIES

The zombies are highly detailed and look great. Our only concern is that they occasionally clump together, which can slow down play.

11 SEARCH PILE

When you search building you take cards from this pile or the adjacent discard pile.

TOP FIVE

MAGIC: THE GATHERING JOURNEY INTO NIX



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4. TEMPLE OF MALADY
£13



5. ATHREOS, GOD OF PASSAGE
£10

Zombies Keep Out

Publisher: Privateer Press // Players: 1-6 // RRP: £27.99

You wouldn't expect a game about zombies to be aimed at the younger end of the market, but that's exactly the case with *Zombies Keep Out*.

Up to six players take on the roll of Bodgers and must build a selection of outlandish contraptions designed to keep endless waves of zombies at bay. Let them break through locations or the main door and it is game over. Think of it as a cardboard version of *Plants Vs Zombies*, and you'll have a good idea of what to expect from this fun and fast-paced action game.

Turns are fairly straightforward, with players taking it in turn to draw a card from the Deck Of Terrible Things and choosing one of three available options that typically involve adding more zombies to the playing areas. Once drawn, it's then possible to choose a variety of actions, from scrounging for specific machine parts to defending your location.

As with many co-operative games, you'll need to constantly work together in order to



stand a fighting chance, but the additional randomness of encounters does make it a little tougher than other examples of the genre. It's certainly not the deepest game, but it is fun, and a great way to get younger players to your gaming table.

BEST FOR: YOUNGER GAMERS

Bowling For Zombies!!!

Publisher: Twilight Creations Inc // Players: 2-5 // RRP: £14.99

Well, this makes a change from the usual zombie gore fest. Rather than killing zombies, you instead play as necromancers who are resurrecting zombies to be used in an impromptu game of bowling.

Players start the game with 13 Zombie Cards depicting the strength of each zombie and various body parts. A number of Lane Cards are put into play, and players must attempt to take out as many pins as possible. The strength of a zombie ranges from 0-9, and players must try to outwit

their opponents to ensure they have a good attempt of clearing up pins. Playing the highest number isn't advisable, as the strongest zombie will simply wander off in search of brains, leaving the player with no points for the round.

Zombies of the same strength attack each other, knocking over the same number of pins in the process and scoring points, while any remaining zombies get to grab the remaining Lane Cards until none remain. Whoever has the most points after ten rounds wins the game.



While there's little real substance to *Bowling For Zombies!!!*, it's very quick to play, and mindless, silly fun. Just don't expect a deep strategy game, and you won't be disappointed. It's just all good, rompy fun.

BEST FOR: ZOMBIE AND BOWLING FANS

Expansion Of The Month ZOMBIES!!! DEADTIME STORIES

Publisher: Twilight Creations Inc // Players: 2-6
RRP: £19.99



While *Zombies!!!* is a highly entertaining and fast-paced game, it lacks a good narrative thread. Twilight Creations rectifies this with this excellent new expansion that adds some much-needed meat to its popular game. Players can now take on roles, complete a set number of story-related goals and even gain experience that carries over to new games, which gives everything a more RPG-like structure.

Fans have created many of the 20 available scenarios, while a number of new rules variants – including creating zombie/human hybrids – ensure the core gameplay feels new and exciting. It's even possible to play *Zombies!!!* bingo, which is worth the price of admission alone. Highly recommended.

Do You Remember? DRAGONLANCE: FIFTH AGE

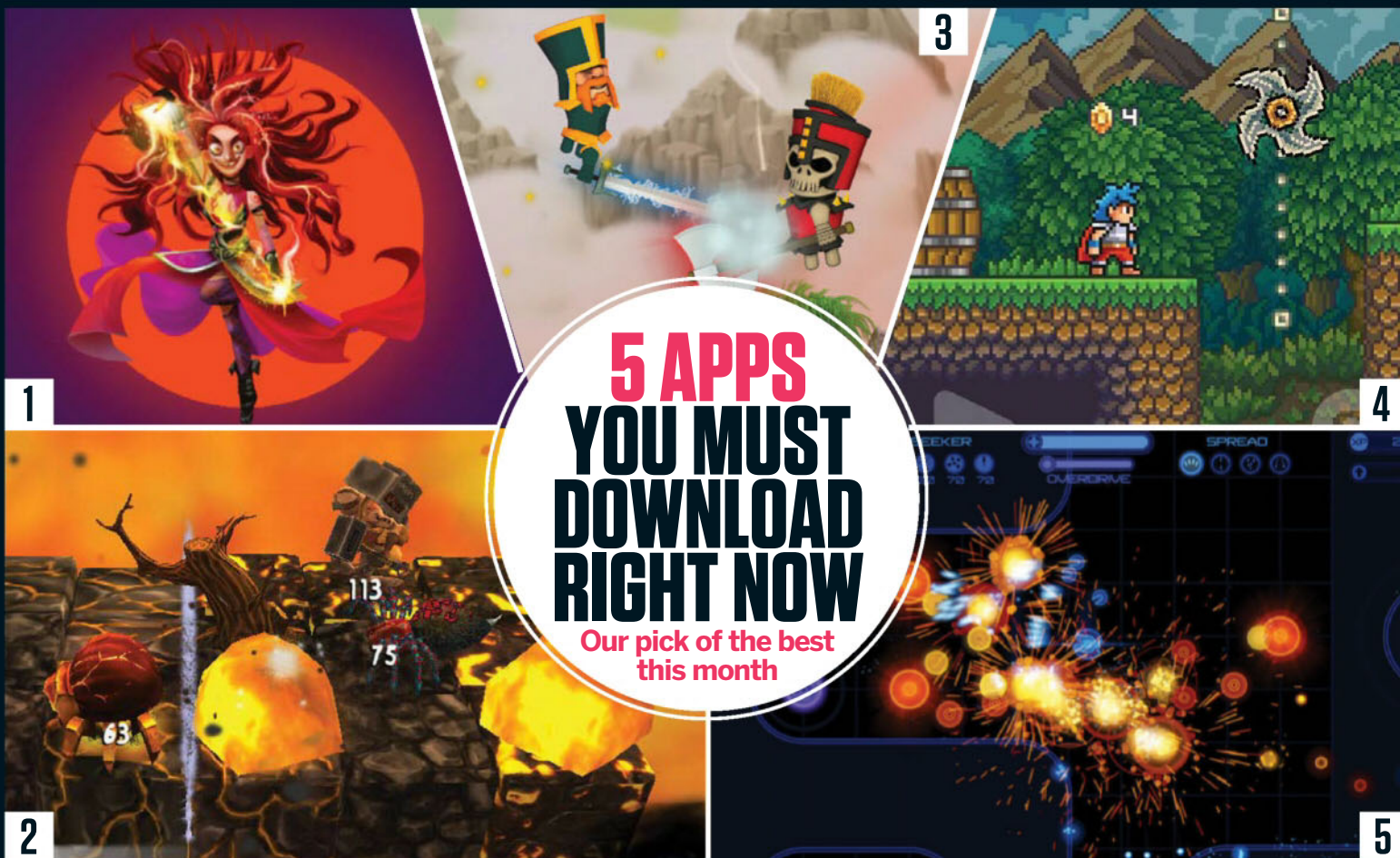
Dungeons & Dragons without the dice



It's a pity *Fifth Age* wasn't more successful, as it's one of the most interesting *Dungeons & Dragons* lines to ever appear. Set in the popular game world of Krynn, it's most notable for the introduction of the SAGA System, an interesting card-based system that placed a

bigger emphasis on storytelling than traditional *D&D*. No dice were used in the game, while mechanics like experience, combat and spell casting were all determined by the number of cards you had access to.

Unfortunately, while it was a bold move for the ailing TSR, many gamers weren't keen on the new rules or the huge changes that were made to Krynn. TSR was sold to Wizards Of The Coast in 1997 and *Fifth Age* disappeared, just over a year after its original release.



PUZZLE BANDITS

PRICE: FREE
FOR: IOS



1 Join Justin Timber and Firestarter Fiona on a quest to stop bandits from taking over their home, the Puzzle World. This bright and detailed match-three puzzle RPG can be played with friends, enemies or against the computer, and the aim is basically to match three. Rather than being a straight-up puzzle, *Puzzle Bandits* incorporates original characters and a fun storyline to transform the game into more of an epic fantasy saga.

BEST FOR: PROBLEM SOLVERS

THE PHANTOM RIFT

PRICE: £1.99/\$2.99
FOR: IOS/ANDROID



2 *The Phantom Rift* is a dark, ethereal world of horrors, mysteries and magic more powerful than your wildest nightmares. You don't know how you're there; all you know is you must get back to safety before it's too late. This beautiful adventure RPG requires you to journey through the Phantom Rift, exploring unknown lands and battling foes. On the downside, the app moves pretty slowly, and battles are long, drawn-out affairs, but it's fun and looks fantastic.

BEST FOR: WANNABE WIZARDS

CLOUD KNIGHTS

PRICE: £1.99/\$2.99
FOR: IOS



3 If you have ever thought that your epic fantasy adventure action games could involve more physics than your time has finally come: *Cloud Knights* is a physics-based action game with an epic fantasy adventure style! Work your way through a series of epic fantasy adventure battles using a combination of physics and action. The very simple controls allow you to either swing and go left or swing and go right, so getting the hang of it doesn't take long. Play the computer or a friend.

BEST FOR: FANS OF DIRECT ACTION

GOBLIN SWORD

PRICE: £0.69/\$0.99
FOR: IOS



4 This fun platformer will have you craving more retro games of yesteryear with its vibrant 16-bit graphic art style. Playing as a tiny, horned-helmeted adventurer, your goal is to traverse a series of colourful landscapes while gathering coins, opening treasure chests and collecting crystals while also warding off monsters that are adamant on attacking you. The game climaxes with a face-off against an evil wizard who broke into your home.

BEST FOR: FANTASY QUESTERS

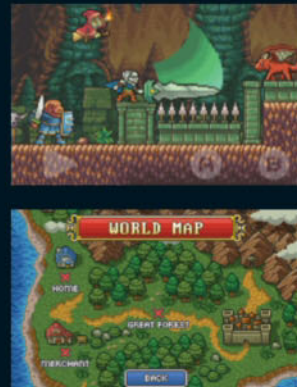
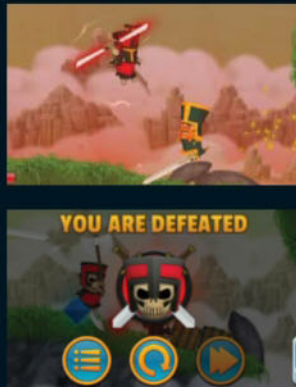
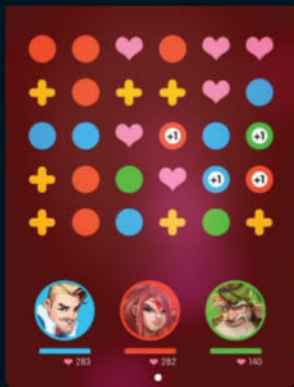
INFERNO 2

PRICE: £1.99/\$2.99
FOR: IOS



5 Long-time fans of shooter games like *Space Invaders* will love this new dual-stick effort by Radiangames. *Inferno 2* is the sequel to the popular *Inferno+*, and likewise, it involves shooting things until they blow up. Brand new upgrades, weapons, levels and relatively simple controls make it even more fun and endlessly addictive. It's almost impossible not to have a good time with *Inferno 2*; it's visually beautiful and has a fun techno soundtrack playing in the background.

BEST FOR: SHARPSHOOTERS

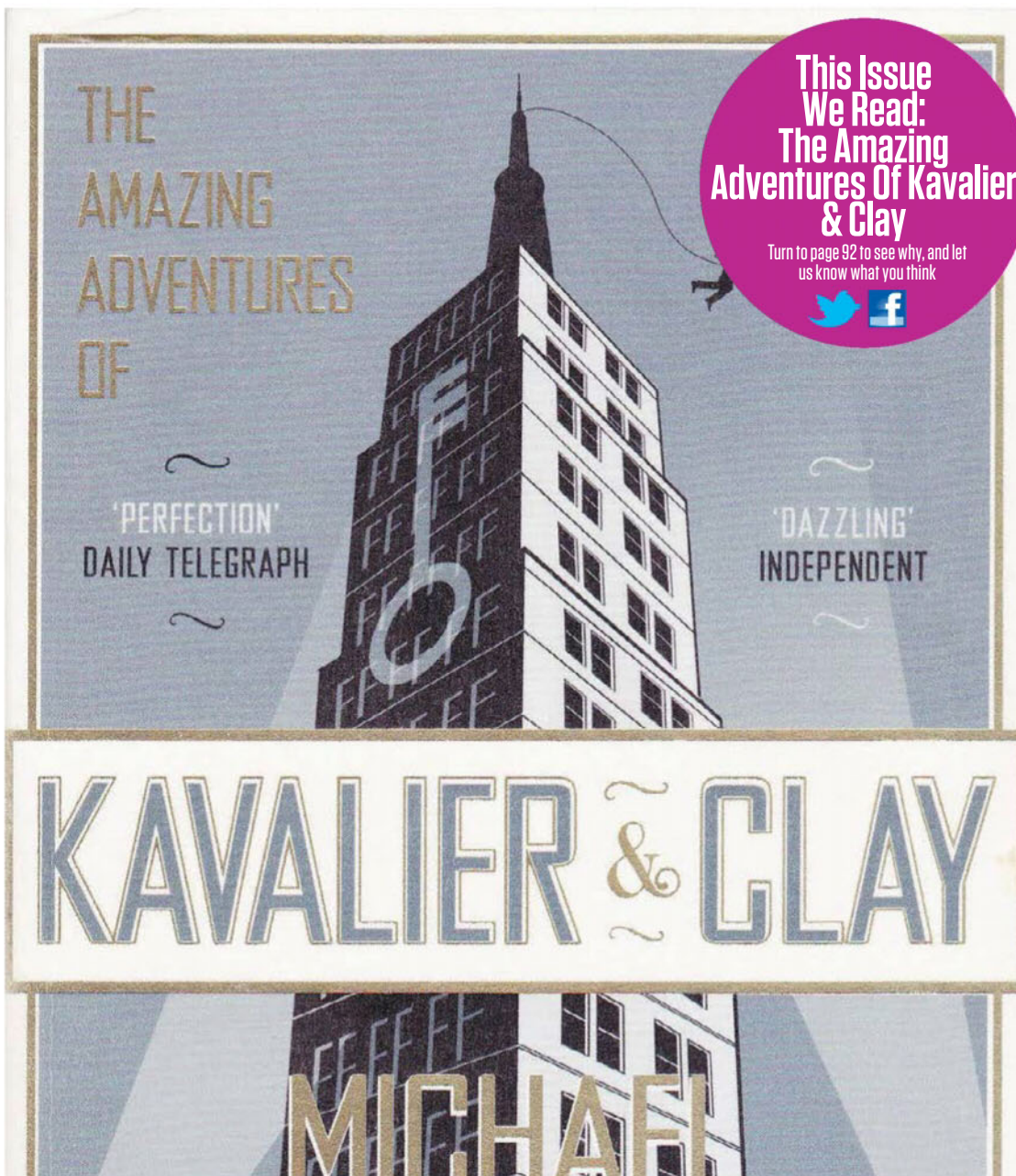


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This Issue We Read:
The Amazing Adventures Of Kavalier & Clay

Turn to page 92 to see why, and let us know what you think



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Next We'll Be Reading:
The Dark Tower series by Stephen King



1 Pick up *The Dark Tower* series by Stephen King, the sprawling fantasy epic that showed off the author's considerable talents in a whole new light.

2 Follow SciFiNow on Twitter. Read and share your thoughts with the hashtag #BookClub; they might make it into the magazine!

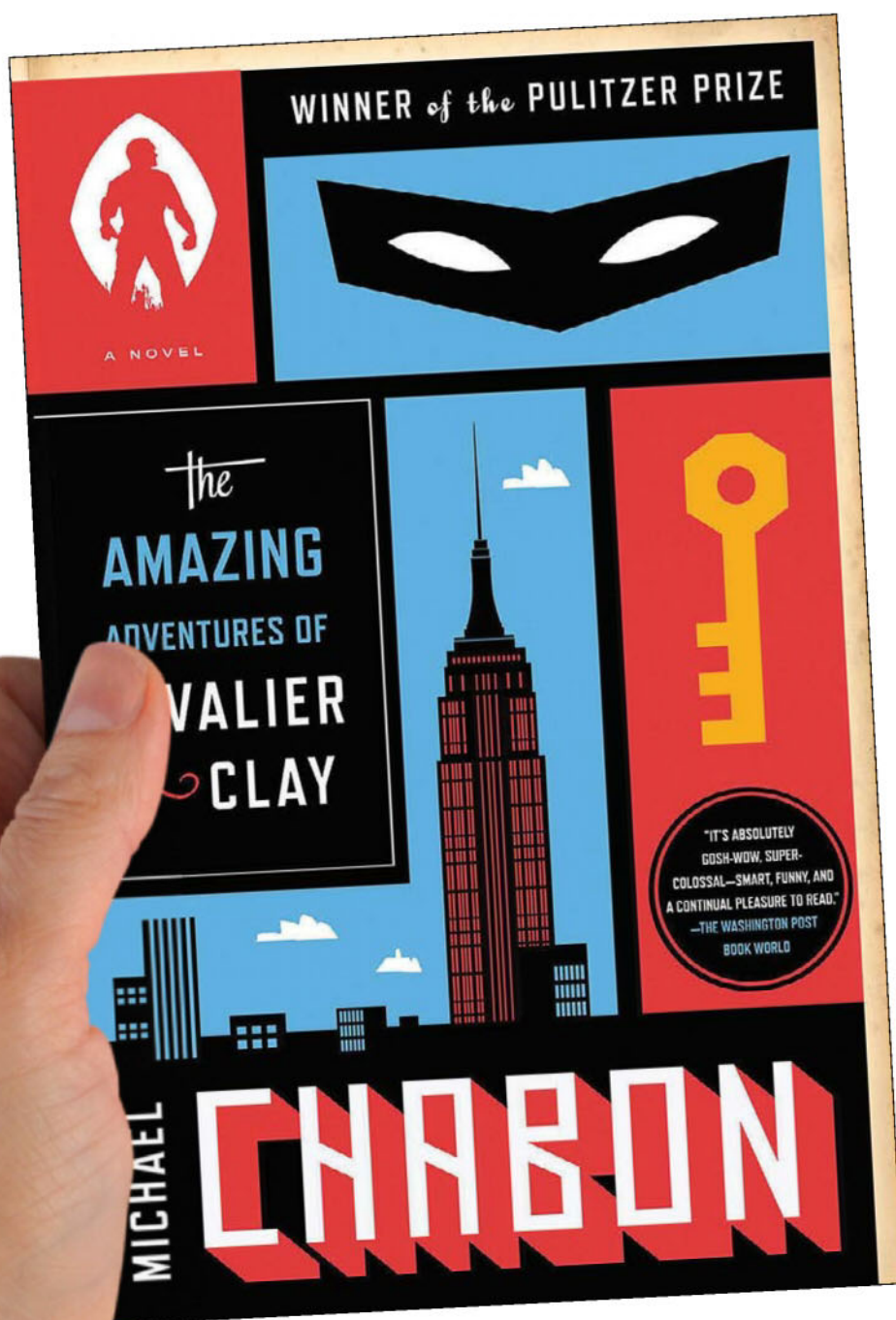
3 You can contribute to the Book Club discussions as much or as little as you like; the most important thing is that you have fun.

4 Pick up issue 102 of SciFiNow to check out what we thought and learn about the history of the book and its author with our Essential Read.

WORDS
MATTHEW
HANDRAHAN

ESSENTIAL READ: THE AMAZING ADVENTURES OF KAVALIER & CLAY

IN RECLAIMING THE PASSIONS OF HIS CHILDHOOD, MICHAEL CHABON PRODUCED HIS MASTERPIECE: A WORK OF THE HIGHEST LITERATURE, AND A LOVE LETTER TO THE GOLDEN AGE OF COMICS



Michael Chabon experienced his first taste of defeat at the age of ten. It was 1973, and his early interest in

comic-books had flourished into a full-blown obsession. Sharon, Michael's mother, had the good sense to try and focus this burst of energy, and rented him a conference room at the local community centre, a venue for the inaugural meeting of the Columbia Comic Book Club. Attendance was poor: just Michael, Sharon and one confused-looking boy who may have walked into the wrong room.

"That was the moment when I began to think of myself as a failure," Chabon wrote in *Manhood For Amateurs*, a collection of essays on fatherhood and family. "It's a habit I never lost."

When you hear a comment like that, it's tempting to describe Michael Chabon as self-deprecating, and that very well may be the truth. But the fact is that success found him as swiftly and easily as failure had. Chabon's first novel, *The Mysteries Of Pittsburgh*, was actually his thesis project for an MFA at the University of California. One of Chabon's teachers, the author MacDonald Harris, had been sending the pages to his agent, entirely without permission. No sooner had he finished the course, he had a book deal with a \$155,000 advance – more than ten times what a debut author might have expected in the mid-Eighties.

SYNOPSIS



When Hitler and his thugs came rolling through Europe, you didn't go to America seeking fame; you did it to survive, but Josef Kavalier never imagined that his

study of magic and escapology would be the key to it all. Those childish fascinations were the reason he found himself in the bedroom of his American cousin, Sammy Klayman, and why his family couldn't be there with him.

But fame arrived nevertheless. After recognising his cousin's talent for drawing, Sammy secures Josef a job as an illustrator for his employer, Empire Novelty, a toy company determined to muscle in on the emerging market for comic-books. Assuming pen-names to mask their Jewish heritage, Sam Clay and Joe Kavalier create an exciting new character: The Escapist, which is an instant hit with the public.

But as the money starts to roll in for Empire, Sammy and Josef realise they aren't getting any...

Chabon had talent and more good fortune than he allowed himself to realise. He certainly seemed to have been aware of his own ability, and when *The Mysteries Of Pittsburgh* proved to be a hit, he set out to demonstrate its full extent. *Fountain City* was to be Chabon's second novel, and exactly the sort of wide-screen opus that many writers start and never quite finish. He produced thousands of pages over several years, but could never find the right shape for the story. Chabon abandoned the project, and instead wrote *Wonder Boys*, an altogether more focused and concise novel about – you guessed it – a successful author struggling with an ambitious new book. *Wonder Boys* was published in 1995, and though its success offered his self-belief some welcome reinforcement, Chabon wondered if he had the kind of talent that a project the size of *Fountain City* demanded.

Then one day, while rummaging in a closet, he found a box – one he had packed and sealed himself more than 15 years ago. The last remnants of a once exhaustive comic collection, whatever he couldn't sell when, as a precocious teenager, his interest turned to prose fiction. In a sense, the box was a time capsule to a time when the creation of a 1,000-page epic would have been the furthest thing from his mind.

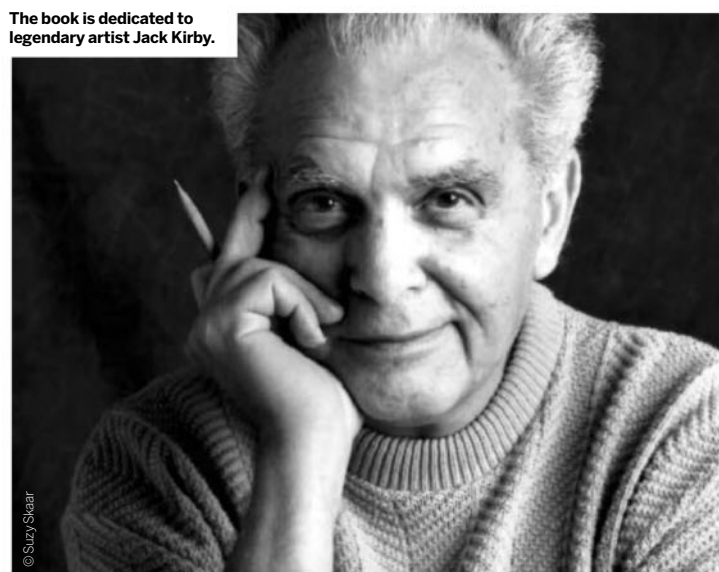
"For 15 years I just lugged it around my life, never opening it," he said in an

interview with Random House. "I came upon it during a move, and slit open all the layers of packing tape and dust. The smell that emerged was rich and evocative of the vanished world of my four-colour childhood imaginings. And I thought, 'There's a book in this box somewhere.'"

Today, Chabon is known as one of the figureheads for literary fiction's reclamation of genre. He has produced many fine essays on just that subject, critiquing works of fantasy in the pages of weighty journals like *The New York Review Of Books*, and calling out his peers when they attempt to dress a work of genre in the finery of 'literature' and fail to acknowledge its roots. His message is clear: any book that gives pleasure to its reader is worthy of admiration and study, be it genre fiction, comic-book or *War And Peace*.

Comic-books had certainly granted Chabon his most rewarding early experiences as a reader. His father, Robert, would bring him issues of *Superman* and *Batman*, which were often packaged with reprinted stories from DC's Golden Age back catalogue – the very stories that his father used to buy when he was a kid of six or seven. Then he discovered Marvel Comics, and in particular, the work of Jack Kirby. "These characters were more screwed up, had neuroses, problems," Chabon told *The New York Times*. "The idea that it would be lonely to be a

The book is dedicated to legendary artist Jack Kirby.



superhero. It makes it easier to identify with – 'Wow, Spider-Man is lonely too.'"

Crucially, in his formative years, Chabon was unaware of any cultural gap between the comics or Stan Lee and Jim Steranko and anything else that caught his attention and fired his imagination. He could switch between reading Norse myths and the latest issue of *The Mighty Thor* without feeling he had crossed some invisible line of credibility.

"The writers whose work I loved ranged from stuff that is still accounted classic

5 Reasons to read... The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay

1 Chabon takes pointers from JRR Tolkien. He has frequently talked about the importance of Tolkien's 'Cauldron Of Story' to his fiction – a receptacle into which any number of elements and influences can be added.

2 *Kavalier & Clay* is generous to its readers. Whether it's the comics, the romance, the war or the depiction of New York City in the Forties, there's bound to be something here you'll like.

3 You'll learn about comics' pioneers. Joe and Sam aren't based on specific people, but their backgrounds and the details of their lives are drawn from Chabon's interviews with actual Golden-Era artists and writers.

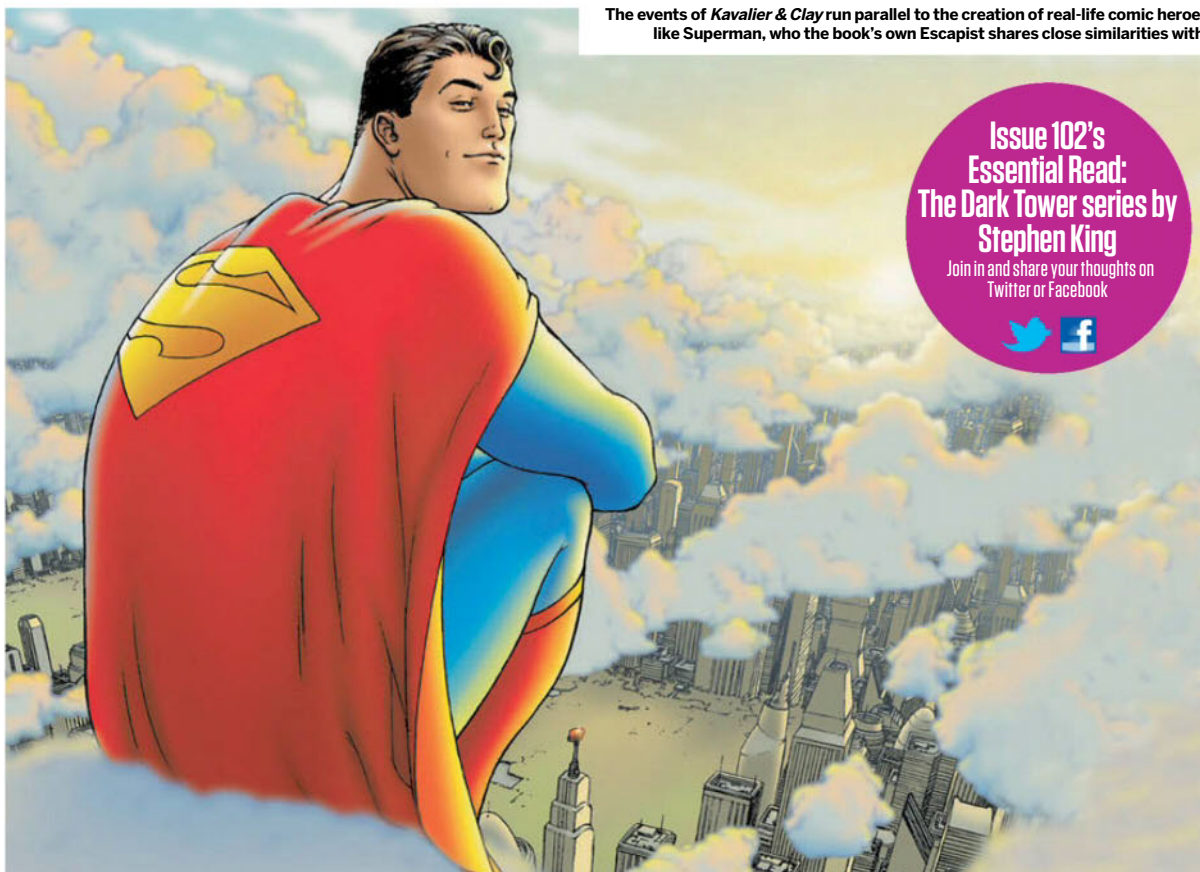
4 And you'll learn about the craft. The sequences where Joe and Sam write and draw issues of *The Escapist* are filled with fascinating information about the techniques used in creating a comic-book.

5 It's effortless reading. Major works of literature are often daunting, but Chabon's gift for clear, seductive prose and the pop culture subject matter make *Kavalier & Clay* a pure joy.

The events of *Kavalier & Clay* run parallel to the creation of real-life comic heroes like Superman, who the book's own *Escapist* shares close similarities with.

Issue 102's
Essential Read:
The Dark Tower series by
Stephen King

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Twitter or Facebook



Where Have I Seen This Before?

HOLDING OUT FOR SOME HEROES

MISTER MIRACLE ▶

While neither Joe Kavalier nor Sam Clay was directly based on a real person, Kavalier's experience as an escape artist was lifted from the life of Jim Steranko, an influential comic artist. And Steranko's history also inspired Mister Miracle, a character by Jack Kirby, who inspired Chabon to his interest in comic books in the first place.

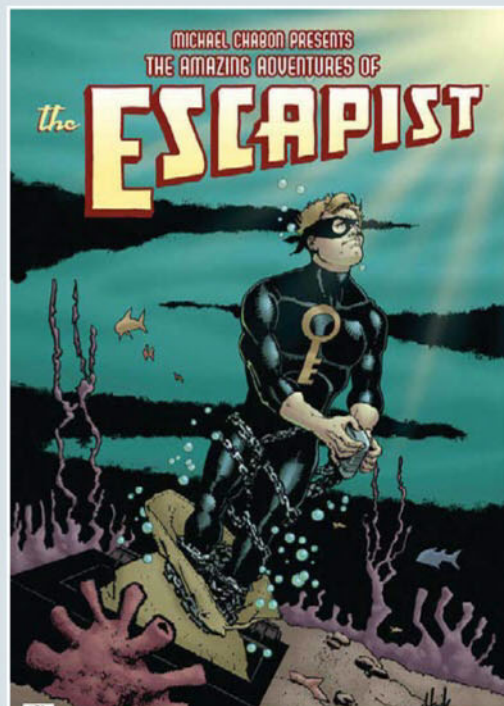


◀ A CONTRACT WITH GOD

Another subtle influence on the character of Joe Kavalier was Will Eisner, a true pioneer of the medium best known for his series, *The Spirit*. Chabon gifted Kavalier with Eisner's unwavering belief that comics would indeed emerge as a real form of art, something he proved with his wonderful work on *A Contract With God* in 1978.

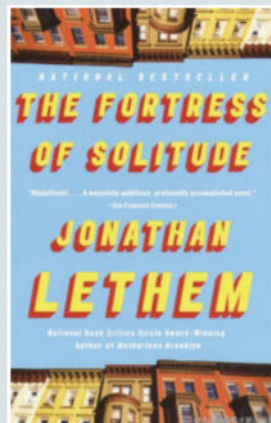
UNDERSTANDING COMICS ▶

As much as anything else, Chabon's novel is a detailed picture of the emerging industry for comics in America, its two main characters exploring the limits of what's possible in this new form. For further reading, you really can't do better than Scott McCloud's seminal book, probably the finest account of the medium's history and practices.



THE AMAZING ADVENTURES OF THE ESCAPIST ▲

Four years after the publication of the novel, Chabon saw the opportunity to bring *The Escapist* to life in the pages of a comic book. Brian K. Vaughan – the creator of *Y: The Last Man* – went one better with *The Escapists*, the story of a comic artist who buys the rights to an out-of-date character created by two Jews called Joe Kavalier and Sam Clay.



◀ THE FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE

The Amazing Adventures Of Kavalier & Clay has few obvious bed fellows in the annals of so-called literary fiction, but Jonathan Lethem has many of the same sensibilities as Chabon. If you enjoy the combination of period setting, comic culture and emotional story then you could do a lot worse than Lethem's *Fortress Of Solitude*.

MAPS AND LEGENDS ▶

The creation of *The Amazing Adventures Of Kavalier & Clay* reconnected Chabon to a deep-rooted interest in comic-books and genre fiction. Since then, he has written many fine essays on the frequently crossed and entirely imaginary line between high and pop culture. The best are collected here, including fine critiques of *His Dark Materials* and *The Road*.



literature, whether it was Edgar Allan Poe, Jack London, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle or Edgar Rice Burroughs, or contemporary writers working when I was a kid like Larry Niven, Isaac Asimov or Arthur C. Clarke," he said in an interview with the *Daily Telegraph*. "I didn't care what genre it belonged to: there was the genre of stuff I loved and the genre of stuff I didn't love so much."

Chabon's predilections evolved and changed. He became more demanding of the books he read until, eventually, he stopped reading comic-books altogether in his late teens. Science fiction and fantasy were never gone entirely, but they were sublimated until his literary diet almost entirely consisted of "so-called adult fiction." Of course, this could just be the familiar tale of growing up and moving on – the spiritual abandonment of the artefacts of childhood – but with Chabon that isn't the whole story. Just as he was getting serious about his reading, he was also getting serious about a possible career as a writer. In 1981, at the age of 18, he started a degree in English Literature, and it quickly became apparent that most people had a narrower view of the subject than he did.

"I had been taught early on in college and graduate school that I wouldn't be taken seriously if I wrote genre fiction, and not only would I not be taken seriously, but people just really didn't want to read it," he said in an interview with *Wired*. "I had workshop leaders who just out-and-out said, 'Please do not turn science fiction in to this workshop.' That was discouraging, obviously, and if I had had more courage and more integrity, I might have stood up to it more than I did, but I wanted to be read, and I wanted to receive whatever benefits there were to be received from the people I was in workshop with, and the teachers I was studying from."

Through his studies, Chabon knew that there was a time when the finest and most revered writers of the day didn't feel the same stifling sense of disapproval. Charles Dickens would veer between the supernatural, social realism and crime fiction, often combining them in a single story, yet his education was conditioning him to reject just that impulse. How many other talented writers had been cajoled away from their personal tastes? When Chabon reflected on his early short stories and the first two novels, he could see that a vital aspect of his personality was missing.

"It presented me eventually with this puzzle to myself of, 'What happened to that idea of writing the kinds of books that you love to read?'" he told *Wired*. "And yes, the books that I was writing were modelled to some degree or another on other books that I loved, but my diet as a reader had



never abandoned things that my output as a writer was just clearly not reflecting, and I wondered about that. 'Why? Why does my backlist look so monochromatic, when the spectrum of my reading is so multi-coloured?' And I didn't really have a good answer. I had a lot of shameful, cowardly answers for that question."

The answer was sealed in that box. As Chabon was typing page after page of *Fountain City*, the impetus and inspiration for a novel on that scale was gathering dust in the closet.

And the key to it all was his father, the person who had given him his first ever

comic-book had read them avidly during the 'Golden Age' that started in the late Thirties and lasted for a decade or more. Chabon's father looked back at that time with great fondness, often speaking in detail about the events, films, music, sports and politics of the era.

"My father really made the middle years of the 20th century in America come alive for me when I was a kid," Chabon told Random House. "And since he was from Brooklyn, his memories and his view of that time had a very New York slant to them. The main thing that I was trying to do in this book, I think, was simply transport myself into that time and that

place the way my father had done for me when I was a little boy."

No matter where you were in America in the Forties, the war against the Axis powers was a major feature of day-to-day life, the national psyche, and comic-books. The fact that Captain America was created in 1940 is no coincidence, and neither is the abundance of comics from that period featuring Superman and his ilk taking on the crude caricatures of the Axis forces.

"IT PRESENTED ME WITH, 'WHAT HAPPENED TO THAT IDEA OF WRITING THE KINDS OF BOOKS THAT YOU LOVE TO READ?'"

MICHAEL CHABON

There was a powerful form of wish-fulfillment taking place in the pages of Golden Era, for the children whose families were caught up in the fighting, and for the writers and artists who made them.

As Chabon started to research the lives of the people making comics, he began to realise that a significant proportion of them were, like him, young Jewish men. Some had been in America for many years, some had fled the rise of the Nazis in Europe, but all of them were making their way in a society with a strong anti-semitic undercurrent. It may be difficult to face up to that reality today, now that images from the Holocaust have been burned indelibly

into our collective memory, but when Hitler came to power anti-Jewish sentiment was a global problem.

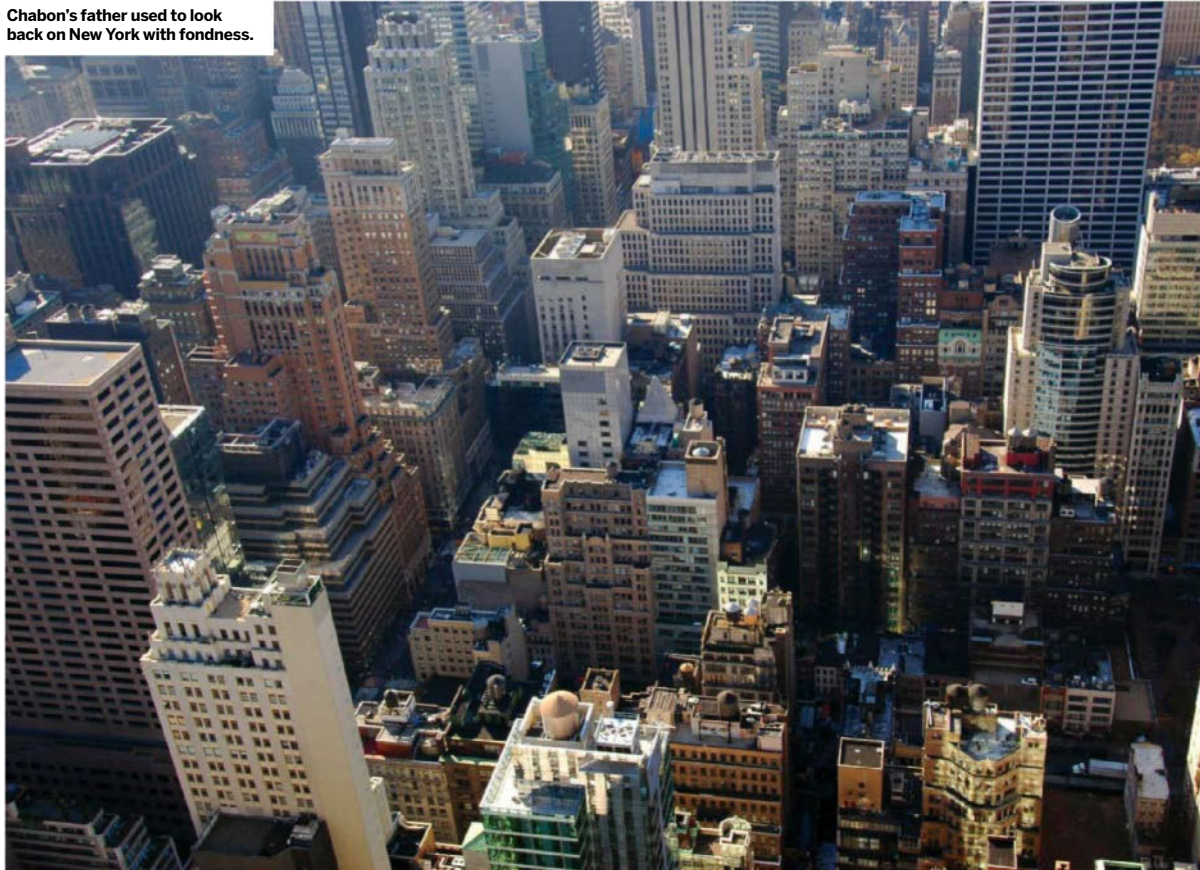
"If you were a young Jewish kid who wanted to be an artist, the more respectable forms of commercial art, illustration, advertising art – all those fields were closed to you at the time," Chabon told *Publisher's Weekly*. "But comics would take you."

What emerged was a story that could stand next to the great American novels of the past, and one that would go on to win the Pulitzer Prize. Spanning two decades and dozens of characters across more than

600 densely detailed pages, *The Amazing Adventures Of Kavalier & Clay* was the book that Chabon once doubted he could write. All it took was the rediscovery of an art form he'd been conditioned to reject, and the acceptance that as a writer, all that really matters is what you love.

"It was a process analogous to coming out," Chabon told *Entertainment Weekly*. "The genre thing was always there in my work, but going through the process of writing *Kavalier & Clay* made me aware I loved this stuff, and I didn't have to be ashamed. The world is full of great literature that's also genre. There's nothing that says you can't have it all in one book."

Chabon's father used to look back on New York with fondness.



Your Take On The Classic

WHAT YOU THOUGHT @SCIFINOW



"An all time favourite! Exciting, moving & informative all at once. So well written you can't tell which bits are fact & fiction. #BookClub" @iutley73



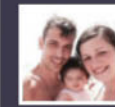
"I tried but failed. Didn't get it at all... #BookClub" @martinianpaul



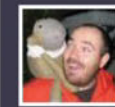
"It's lovely. Have read it several times, as I learned more about the history of comics #BookClub" @fechtbuch



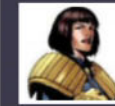
"Love it! Really thankful for a book with complicated gay characters #BookClub" @GeeksOUT



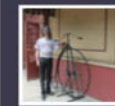
"Excellent book, wasn't what I was expecting at all! #BookClub" @pete_holbert



"Read it a while back now, awesome book if you're into comics, #graphicnovels and superheroes #BookClub" @steveassart



"It's a slow burn, but it reminds you of how amazing the origins of comics as a medium really are #BookClub" @KellyKanayama



"I thought it was a great book. It's a shame they have never been able to turn it into a movie, though #BookClub" @Harlegator68

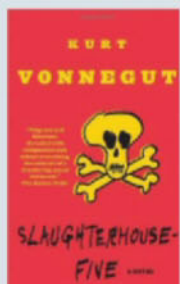


"Fascinating detail of comics in the 40s, interesting characters #bookclub" @Chas_Boz

What do you think? Let us know on Twitter or Facebook

Your Five Time-hoppers

CHOOSE YOUR TOP FIVE @SCIFINOW ON TWITTER



1. Slaughterhouse-Five

Kurt Vonnegut
"I felt the message was perfect + it dealt with time travel in a fun way with none of the shenanigans #BookClub"
@neil_bomb



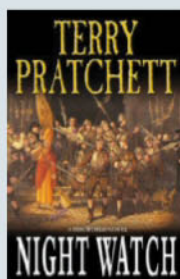
2. The 57 Lives Of Alex Wayfare

MG Buehrlen
"Smart YA, moving romance, clever plot, need the sequel yesterday. #BookClub"
@EffingRainbow



3. The Sterkarm Handshake

Susan Price
"Awesome, wacky and yet somehow still realistic. #BookClub"
@damien14273



4. Night Watch

Terry Pratchett
"Brilliant book and I like how they handle the time travel. #BookClub"
@Rhys180



5. The First Fifteen Lives Of Harry August

Claire North
"I just finished the book, it's such a new & interesting take on time travel ideas. #BookClub"
@ZombieKudos

Details Author: Rebecca Alexander Publisher: Del Rey Books Price: £16.99 Released: Out now

THE SECRETS OF BLOOD AND BONE

SciFiNow
Must read now!

The house of the dead

Rebecca Alexander's *The Secrets Of Blood And Bone* is a supernatural thriller with just about everything you could want, from vampirism and sorcery to alchemy and blood rituals.

Jackdaw Hammond lives on 'borrowed time'. She and her young companion Sadie would be dead if it wasn't for herbal concoctions and protective magic circles. Keeping a low profile, what with technically being dearly departed and all, the pair move to a cottage in the Lake District where the previous occupant died – but was that before or after the fire that devastated her home?

Jack's suspicions mount when Sir Henry Dannick comes to call, looking for a life-saving tincture that the old herbalist brewed for his family, now

desperately needed by his grandson. There's also something unsettling about this old house, with its wild, overgrown garden that seems to have a life of its own.

Kelley's fictional counterpart travels to Venice – a beautifully treacherous place where he hopes to find redemption.

Where Alexander triumphs is not just through her characters' inner thoughts,

"ALEXANDER TRIUMPHS NOT JUST FROM HER CHARACTERS' THOUGHTS, BUT VIA THEIR SURROUNDINGS"

As in *The Secrets Of Life And Death*, Alexander lays foundations for present-day drama in the past, yanking the action backwards in time to her third narrator, Edward Kelley, then back again. A real historical figure and associate of 16th century English astronomer Dr John Dee,

but also from their surroundings. For all his education, Kelley is in over his head, and his exceedingly British blushes when face-to-face with the dangerous sexuality of Carnevale Venice make for heady and uncomfortable reading.

Jack is a woman waking up in many respects. There are expository jogs of memory to be found for fans of the previous novel, but newcomers will rather enjoy the way Alexander slowly reveals their back stories. Each of her POV chapters begin with a paragraph from the perspective of the garden, and this parallel awakening of life in Jack builds the sense that her and Sadie being here is going to mean something.

The author also does more than invoke the fantasy novel bag of tricks when it comes to vampirism and the occult; she postulates that people may have their own predisposed power or ability to draw from, and that in some families this can be dangerous. Jack's strength is with animals; Sadie has a connection to the old witch's garden – each has their own innate skills which are put to the test.

The conclusion might be controversial, but it's completely appropriate for the cleverly woven arc Alexander has conceived for Jack. The novel chops and changes between time periods, but doesn't feel gimmicky, and one plot never quite outstays its welcome. All in all, it's an urban fantasy series to watch out for.

Krystal Sim

VERDICT ★★★★★

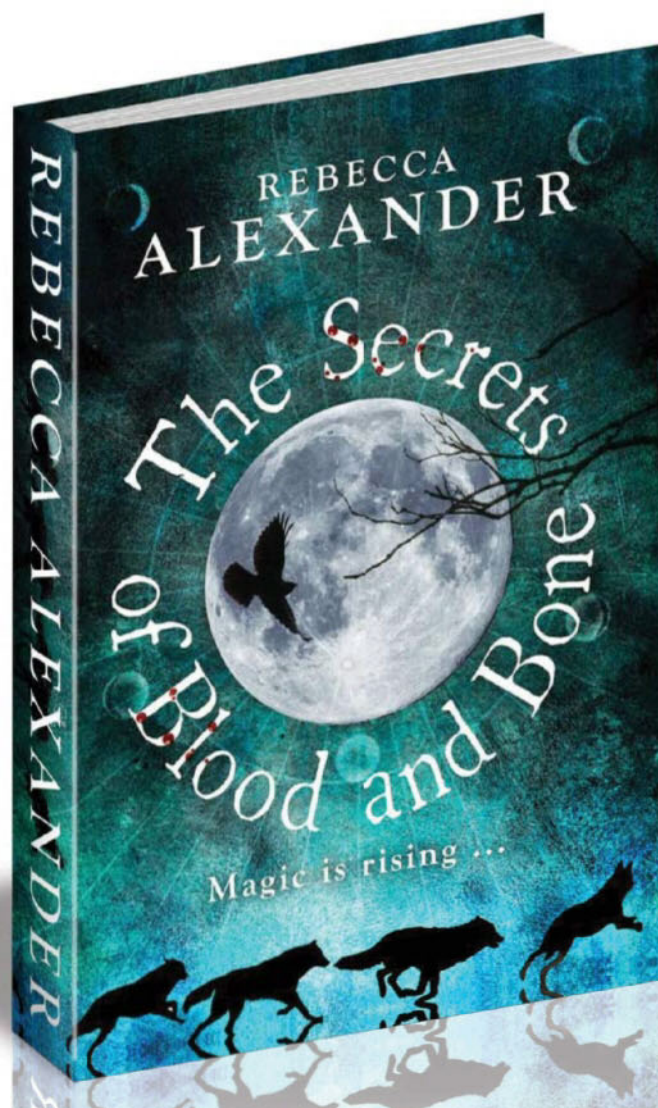


IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...

A Discovery Of Witches

Deborah Harkness

An professor embraces magic and finds herself romantically entangled with a vampire.



Details Author: Adam Nevill Publisher: Pan Books, Pan Macmillan Price: £7.99 Released: Out now

NO ONE GETS OUT ALIVE

Living it up with the dead

Starting as it means to go on, *No One Gets Out Alive* is bone-chilling from the very first page. The plot follows Stephanie Booth as she moves into a cheaply rented room in Birmingham. Jobless, abandoned and alone, she opts to live in a dirty old slum as she works temping roles. 82 Edgware Road, however, has a terrifying secret – the building is inhabited by

disembodied voices that sob, pray and wander the house at night.

Admittedly, it's a paranormal horror, but there's something implausible about *No One Gets Out Alive*. It's not necessarily the hauntings – after all, that's the driving force behind the entire story – it's the human response. The protagonist *immediately* realises that the house is haunted,

claustrophobic vibe, but thankfully the novel progresses and the story eventually develops.

That's not to say *No One Gets Out Alive* isn't a relatively decent horror tale, however. It's definitely scary, and you're really transported into Edgware Road, but it just seems to use of a lot of clichés – naïve young female protagonist, psychotic males,

"IT DOESN'T FEEL LIKE THERE'S ANY KIND OF NATURAL PROGRESSION"

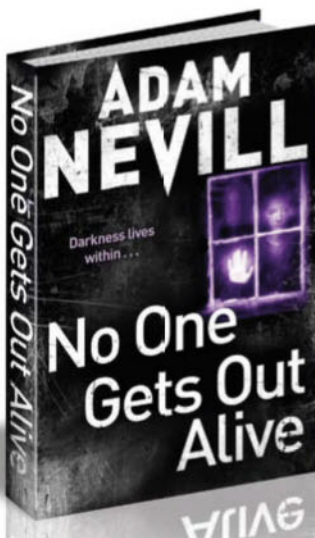
and yet goes back night after night. Really? Eventually she seeks out new digs and friends, but it doesn't feel like there's any kind of natural progression. It's almost an afterthought.

On top of this, Adam Nevill's novel offers no respite to the scary spectres and their incessant haunting, making it fairly difficult to want to read, particularly the first 100 pages. This incessant sense of horror creates an almost

ghouls and ghosts. It's not terribly memorable, but if you're searching for something that makes going to sleep a bit of a nightmare then this is definitely for you.

Philippa Grafton

VERDICT ★★☆☆☆



Author: Melinda Snodgrass Publisher: Titan Books Price: £7.99 Released: Out now

THE EDGE OF REASON

Ours is not to reason why...

Wondering how *Bridget Jones* has found her way into the world of fantasy? Fear not; this is a much darker edge – there is no place for Hugh Grant, bottles of chardonnay or very large pants! What there is room for is science, religion, magic, goodies, baddies and a big war between the dark and the light.

Teetering on the edge is beat cop Richard Oort, who wants to prove his worth to the doubters that surround him. His 15 minutes of fame arrive on one night shift, as he rescues a young girl being chased by men – made of mud and sticks. Richard's heroic actions attract the attention of a wealthy businessman, and a religious crusader known as the 'Face of American Christianity'. Before

long, Richard learns that he is a crucial pawn in an ancient war between the light of reason and technology and the darkness of religion and sorcery.

Richard is not a typical hero; his choices are questionable, he is small in stature, inexperienced, and has Daddy issues. On a positive note, he is very pretty, albeit in a creepy, Aryan, master-race kind of way. Richard's unexpected support network are a formidable yet fractured bunch, although characters like Cross the spontaneously shattering God could do with more page time and motives for their choices. Hopefully this is being left for future novels.

With more layers than horsemeat lasagne, this



challenges the reader on many levels. Science versus religion isn't a new idea, but Snodgrass takes it further, adding identity and twisting the rules.

Claire Nicholls

VERDICT ★★★★★



IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...
Darkness Haunts
Susan Illene
An ex-soldier is hunting for her missing friend in Fairbanks, Alaska, a supernatural haven.

YOUR READS

What you lot have been reading this month



"Red Dragon by Thomas Harris, that scene where Will Graham visits Dr Lecter still gives me chills. Brilliant! #BookClub" @paul_bowler



"Red Country by Joe Abercrombie. Like it a lot. #BookClub" @xwing_t65



"Revisiting Hyperion Falls. Gotta love that Shrike Tree of Pain. #BookClub" @MrsSheaWong



"Working through @neilhimself's American Gods. Dark, mysterious and sprawling. Good stuff. #BookClub" @Brummie_Jen



"Started Hush Hush by Becca Fitzpatrick – got the other 3 in the series to read too. #BookClub" @ToniMarie1991



"Currently reading Bob Shaw's Other Days, Other Eyes – a little dated to be honest, but Slow Glass is an awesome idea. #BookClub" @mockery66



"About to finish Horns, really gripping... I wonder how it ends. #BookClub" @Cascararogue



"The Wrong Girl by CJ Archer. Interesting story but not overly exciting. Part of a trilogy but doubt I'll be getting 2&3. #BookClub" @Mike_J_Lord



"A History Of The World In 100 Objects... got an archaeology thing going on at the mo. Shoot me now. #BookClub" @TheCrowLady



"I'm reading Horns, absolutely brilliant so far! #BookClub" @SmaugOfErebor



"The First Fifteen Lives Of Harry August by @catwebb42 is fantastic :) #BookClub" @DavidBedwell



"Working my way through my Roald Dahl boxset, currently on The Witches. #BookClub" @quidditysea

Tell us what you're reading on Twitter or Facebook



GO SECONDS WITH

Ben Aaronovitch



Where does the beginning of *Foxglove Summer* find Peter Grant and The Folly?
There's no fun building up a character and his natural milieu if you don't then

sling him right out of his comfort zone. That's why *Foxglove Summer* sees Peter Grant heading to the wild border regions of Herefordshire, where the cop on the spot can find himself the only law for miles around. The countryside is a fascinating place – it's not nearly as different from the city as it like to think it is, but it definitely has its own traditions, history and problems.

"I'VE NEVER HAD AN END POINT IN MIND"

Why do you think London is such a brilliant setting for urban fantasy?

I always find this a strange question. As a native Londoner who's lived in his city all his life, it's hard to imagine why, when sitting on such a cornucopia of material, I'd want to go to all the extra trouble of, say, setting it in Manchester or Dublin. Nottingham in particular is crying out for an urban fantasy: the history, the mythology, the cave system – somebody's got to step up for that one. London does have some singular qualities that make it particularly attractive: its size, its 2,000-year history as cultural melting pot, and the important fact that your American editor can point to it on a map – at least three times out of five.

Do you have an end point in mind for the *Rivers Of London* series?

I've never had a particular endpoint in mind for the series because I've always seen them as a sequence of books that share the same protagonist. In this way they're much more like crime fiction than fantasy. I was careful to make Peter a young man to avoid the problem Ian Rankin and Ruth Rendell had when their detectives aged past mandatory police retirement ages. I will probably be long dead before Peter has to pick up his pension. That said, if they stop selling, I run out of ideas or it just stops being fun – that's when the series will end.



Foxglove Summer by Ben Aaronovitch is available now, published by Gollancz.

Details Author: William Gibson Publisher: Penguin Viking Price: £18.99 Released: 20 November

THE PERIPHERAL

The grass is always greener in the other time

The father of cyberpunk returns with this occasionally meandering but undeniably sharp piece of time-hopping science fiction.

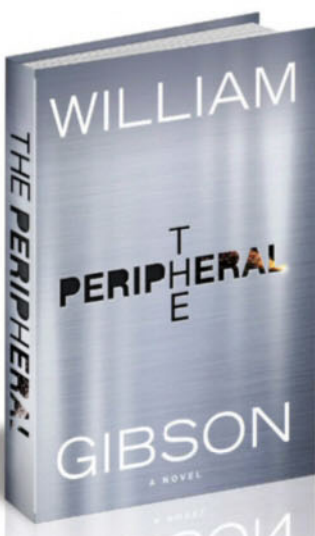
Some time in the near future, Flynn takes a shift from her brother testing a game. Roughly 100 years from her time, Netherton is a jaded PR who is about to be fired for his role in a very public fiasco. When Flynn sees what she thinks

is a character in her game being murdered, Netherton knows the truth: she was seeing his present, and that dead girl is the sister of his former client.

As he and his influential friends hurry to find out who's responsible for the murder, Netherton reaches out to the past to bring Flynn into his present. In the process of figuring out how they're going

and effort in to understand the times and places he's showing you.

It helps that Flynn is such a likeable character – a strong woman living in time where integrity is not a common commodity. However, while the hopping back and forth between time periods allows Gibson to paint a vivid picture, the lack of actual story being told means it's tough to shake the feeling that



"DOESN'T MAKE CONCESSIONS TO THE CASUAL SCI-FI READER"

to solve this mystery, the pair witness each other's times and the circumstances that have led to the current state of the world.

William Gibson doesn't make a lot of concessions to the casual sci-fi reader. Alternating chapters between his two leads, he shows the world of each protagonist as they see them. There's no condescending potted history or explanation of tech – at least not to start with. The author expects you to put the time

this tale could have been told in far fewer pages.

The Peripheral is gripping once it gets going, but requires patience that might make it for fans only.

Jonathan Hatfull
VERDICT ★★☆☆☆

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...
The Left Hand Of Darkness
Ursula K LeGuin
Perception and presumption are key elements of LeGuin's sci-fi classic

Details Author: Richard Littler Publisher: Ebury Press Price: £12.99 Released: Out now

DISCOVERING SCARFOLK

A handy guide to nowhere you'd want to go

Twin Peaks, Sunnydale, Silent Hill – there are plenty of creepy towns you'd never want to visit. Now, there's one much closer to home, too. Scarfolk is a small town somewhere in the north-west of England that's stuck in a constant loop of the Seventies, and it's pretty scary.

Discovering Scarfolk is based on the Scarfolk Council blog, created by author and designer Richard Littler. Using actual adverts, TV shows and public service announcements from the Seventies, he creates sinister and surreal artefacts from the spooky town. The book collects the blog posts and adds an extra layer of narrative: the documents were gathered by Daniel Bush, an unfortunate single father who

got trapped in Scarfolk, and sent to Dr Ben Motte, an editor and taxidermist who created the book to make sense of it all.

As a frame, it's just enough to hold the story together. The real draw, though, is the design work. You'll recognise a lot of the imagery, but it's been given a satirical makeover.

Littler pokes fun at the more odd attitudes and preoccupations of Seventies Britain in a way that's more effective when done subtly; the Daniel Bush story is occasionally so crude it becomes silly, but turn the page and there's another poster warning you of the dangers of fireworks or witches.

You might never actually be able to go to Scarfolk, but

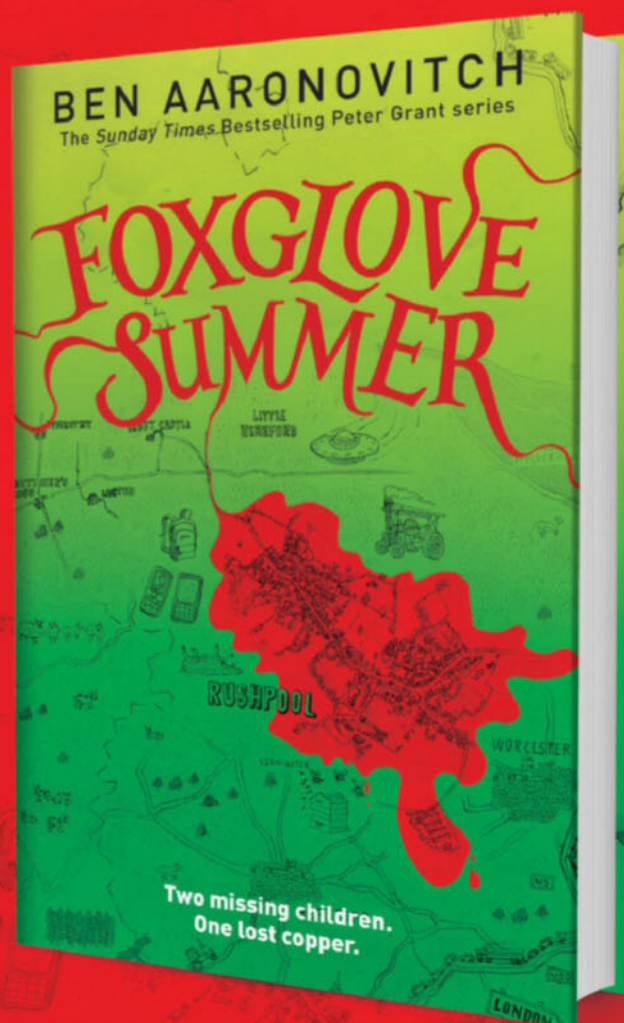


after reading this book you'll never really escape either – the parodies are so accurate that you'll never look at the real thing in the same way again.

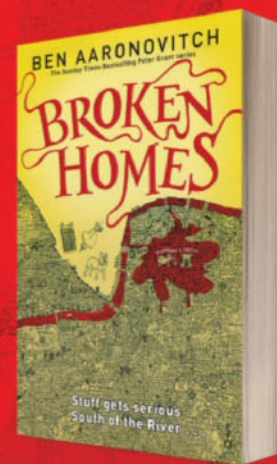
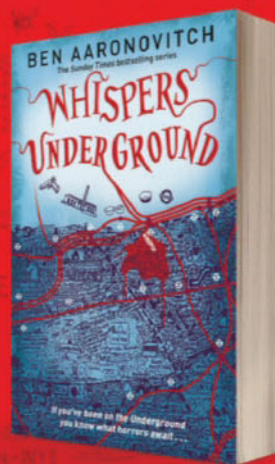
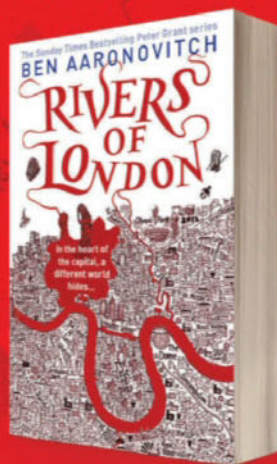
Sarah Dobbs
VERDICT ★★★★★

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...
House Of Leaves
Mark Z Danielewski
It's similar in format – the notes of a madman – but way more serious and creepy.

Peter Grant: Back on the case but lost in the country.



Catch up with all of Peter's exploits
in the Peter Grant series



Details Author: Stephen Lloyd Jones Publisher: Headline Price: £15.99 Released: Out now

WRITTEN IN THE BLOOD

Blood is thicker than water

Following on from his debut, *The String Diaries*, Stephen Lloyd Jones' latest thriller expands the stories of mother and daughter Hannah and Leigh.

With the book set years later, readers needn't worry about jumping straight in; *Written In The Blood* intrigues from the outset.

The plot has clearly been considered in depth; unique ideas are penned well, although initially, narrative jumps between chapters – and time – can be difficult to follow. However, as characters' plots develop, the puzzle soon falls into place, and you'll undoubtedly enjoy unravelling links between the protagonists.

Jones' character building is to be commended. Not one lead is devoid of flaws, with each boasting well-developed narratives and believability that encourage page turning right through to the end. Antagonists aren't always easy to spot either, keeping tension levels high and providing ample opportunity for plot twists.

The heavy use of Hungarian terms can stunt readability at times, so it's useful to note

the existence of the glossary of terms before progressing too far into the book.

Despite the title arguably being a giveaway, the level of gore is still a surprise; disagreements between characters often turn into savage brutality, before an incredibly violent stand-off towards the conclusion ramps the bloodshed up to a whole new high. Jones obviously isn't shy of killing off those close to protagonists, and should be praised for emphasising the effect this has on his leads from an emotional standpoint, expanding their stories further and making them increasingly gripping.

Written In The Blood is fast-paced throughout, and as it approaches its conclusion, the narratives and characters race towards each other, ultimately making for an exciting finale.

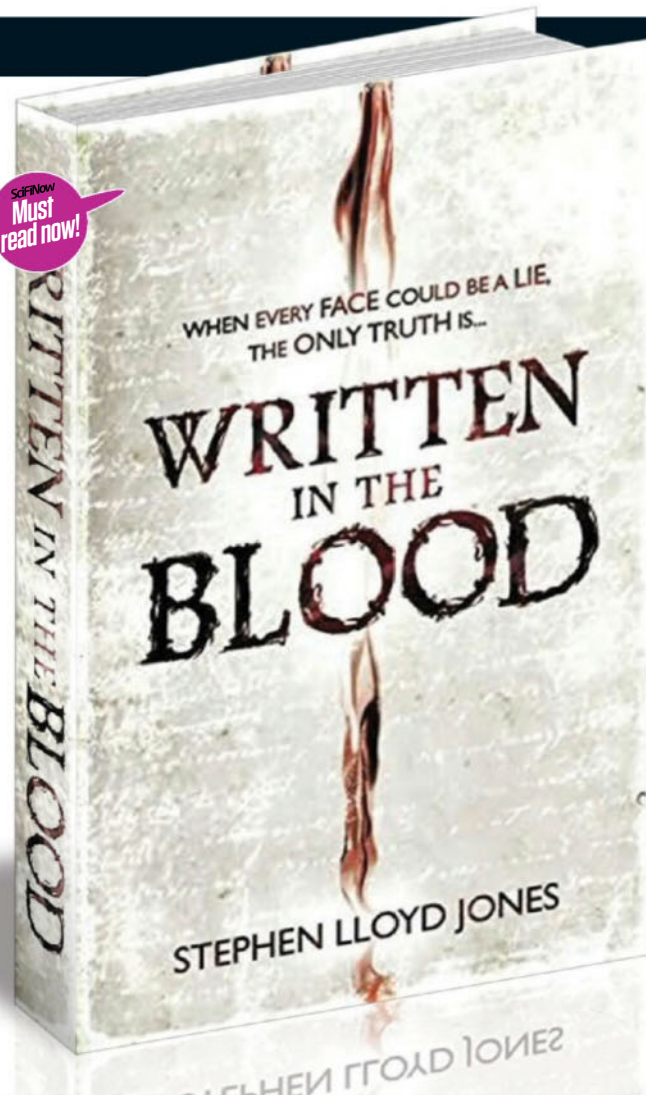
Rowena Heal

VERDICT ★★★★★



IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...

The String Diaries
Stephen Lloyd Jones
Exploring *Written In The Blood* protagonists Hannah and Leigh's pasts, Jones' gripping debut is a must-read.



Details Author: Mark Morris Publisher: Titan Books Price: £7.99 Released: Out now

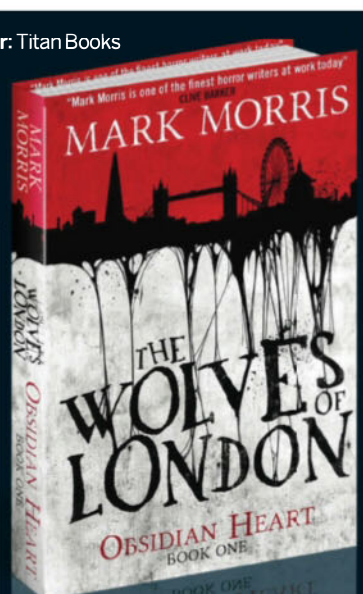
THE WOLVES OF LONDON

The old firm

The first book in Mark Morris's *Obsidian Heart* trilogy sets out to make an impression in the extremely crowded world of London-set urban fantasy. It's narrated by Alex Locke, an ex-con turned psychology professor who's forced to reconnect with his old friends when a drug dealer threatens his daughter. The job they want him to do seems easy enough, but slipping back into a life of crime isn't the biggest danger.

That would be the *Wolves of London*, a collection of horrifying supernatural creatures who burst into his life like *Hellraiser's* Cenobites crossed with the inhabitants of *Silent Hill*.

The blend of crime thriller and supernatural horror is skilfully accomplished, recalling Sarah Pinborough's *Dog Faced Gods* trilogy.



The structure does seem to settle into a formulaic pattern, but it's great fun, and Morris creates some genuinely chilling creatures and sequences. It's also not short on ambition, as the final third takes Alex on a journey that we're excited to see continue.

Jonathan Hatfull

VERDICT ★★★★★

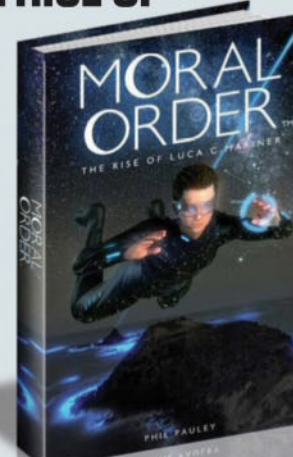
Details Author: Phil Pauley Publisher: Clink Street Publishing Price: £8.99 Released: Out now

MORAL ORDER: THE RISE OF LUCA C MARINER

Lunar sea

Life doesn't seem too bad for Luca C Mariner, given that he's the hero of a YA novel. The world may have retreated into mega-cities and his father may have a reputation as a traitor, but he's got good friends and he's brilliant at the battle-sim videogame they play. However, as Luca and his friends Ceibastian and Asia Mae are swept up in an alien invasion that will show that life is very, very different to a videogame.

This first book in Phil Pauley's *Moral Order* series gets off to a cracking start, pitching us right into the pitch of battle (well, kind of), and it never really pauses for breath. The novel is at its best when making the most of Luca's ability to throw himself into any situation; when he pauses for contemplation it's slightly less effective.



By showing us the action through the eyes of his young heroes, Pauley keeps things moving at pace, and Luca makes for a likeable hero. This is a good start for the *Moral Order* series, and a richly detailed piece of sci-fi.

Dennis McCabe

VERDICT ★★★★★

'IT GOES OFF LIKE A BOMB IN YOUR LAP'

DAILY EXPRESS

THE DAY THE EARTH CAUGHT FIRE

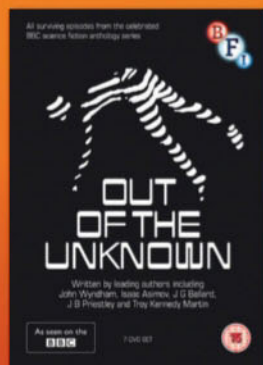
Newly remastered by the BFI National Archive and packed with extras, this is the definitive version of the classic British science fiction thriller.

Starring Edward Judd, Leo McKern and Janet Munro, and directed by veteran filmmaker Val Guest (*The Quatermass Xperiment*).

BLU-RAY AND DVD OUT 17 NOVEMBER



OTHER CULT AND CLASSIC SCI-FI FROM THE BFI



**OUT OF THE
UNKNOWN**
7-DVD SET



RED SHIFT
DVD



THE CHANGES
2-DVD



THE BOY FROM SPACE
2-DVD



OUTER SPACE
DVD

Details Writer: Kieron Gillen **Artists:** Luke Ross, Joe Bennet
Publisher: Marvel/Panini **Price:** £12.99 **Released:** Out now

IRON MAN: RINGS OF THE MANDARIN

You shoulda put a ring on it

The sudden return of dark elf monarch Malekith the Accursed to Marvel NOW! has sweet Stan Lee to do with his potential as a bad guy and everything to do with his appearance in *Thor: The Dark World*.

Strangely though, his role in Kieron Gillen's *Iron Man* – which should by all rights be the most contrived and ill-fitting pair-up – is far more satisfying than his arc in Jason Aaron's otherwise fantastic *Thor: God Of Thunder*. Here, he continues Gillen's larger arc about Tony Stark's secret brother, new city project and scattered techno-magic rings of classic Iron Man foe the Mandarin – all of which sounds ridiculous, but hey kids, comics!

Green Lantern ring-style, the ten rings of the Mandarin (which all have their own attributes and precocious AI) have been scattered far and wide in search of people united in their hatred of Marvel's leading corporate playboy vigilante. Choosing Malekith based on the elves' mythological aversion to iron, the monarch of Svartalfheim quickly takes charge of the relationship, hunting down the other ring bearers and using his magic to cut the rings in his possession off from their AI network. With Marvel UK occultist Dark Angel (who Gillen



recently wrote in the deeply confusing *Revolutionary War* nostalgia-fest) on standby as his Oracle, Iron Man drops down a portal or three into the Norse otherworld to get the rings back and end Malekith's reign of terror.

You really need to have followed not just the previous 23 issues, but have a fair grounding in Marvel lore generally, as *Rings Of The Mandarin* continues Gillen's breathless ride through big ideas and browning back issues, transforming fully from Marvel's rising star into Marvel's answer to Grant Morrison.

James Hoare

VERDICT ★★★★★



IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...

Iron Man: The Armor Wars
 David Michelinie, Bob Layton/
 Mark Bright, Barry Windsor-Smith
 Stark goes off the grid on the hunt for his stolen suits.

Details Writers: HP Lovecraft, INJ Culbard **Artist:** INJ Culbard
Publisher: SelfMadeHero **Price:** £14.99 **Released:** Out now

THE DREAM-QUEST OF UNKNOWN KADATH

The Dream, The Ghoul and the Creeping Horror

This is INJ Culbard's fourth HP Lovecraft adaptation, and he's got it down perfectly, interpreting the master of the Mythos with enough fidelity to bring out his intent, but enough creative judgement to ease things along.

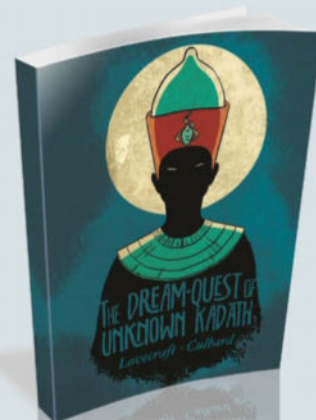
The Dream-Quest Of Unknown Kadath is perhaps the most challenging. It's the story that places Lovecraft firmly in the oeuvre of his contemporaries like Robert E Howard and Edgar Rice Burroughs, turning the Cthulhu Mythos into a sort of Narnia-like fantasy kingdom.

It's still bleak and existential, but it also has friendly talking cats ("You'll not find a cheering purr or a homely mew in all of that cold twilight realm") and a

surprisingly upbeat ending in which the heroic intellectual Randolph Carter wakes up back in Boston.

James Hoare

VERDICT ★★★★★



Details Writer: Frederik Peeters **Artist:** Frederik Peeters
Publisher: SelfMadeHero **Price:** £12.99 **Released:** Out now

AAMA: VOLUME 2 - THE INVISIBLE THROG

In space no one can hear you dream

The second volume of Frederik Peeters' space-faring voyage of discovery switches out the sense of wonder for creeping dread. With our battered hero Verloc Nim and his highly strung brother Conrad Nim having arrived on the planet Ona(ji), they're forced to saddle up and traverse a steadily changing alien landscape to discover what's become of Aama.

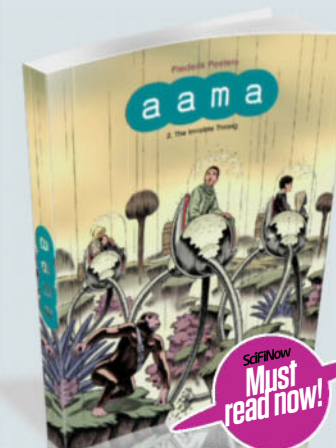
It's like *Prometheus* reimagined by Hayao Miyazaki: big themes, wide-eyed children and retro-futurism striding into a world of disquieting biological horrors – a terraforming entity that's transforming life on this planet and jump-starting evolution with deadly consequences.

There's a hint of *Solaris* in it too, as perceptions are mangled,

Conrad is beginning to fray around the edges and Verloc is haunted by the decisions that cost him his wife and child.

James Hoare

VERDICT ★★★★★



Details Writers: John Wagner, Andy Diggie **Artists:** Henry Flint, Enrique Alcatena
Publisher: Rebellion **Price:** £17 **Released:** Out now

PREDATOR VS JUDGE DREDD VS ALIENS

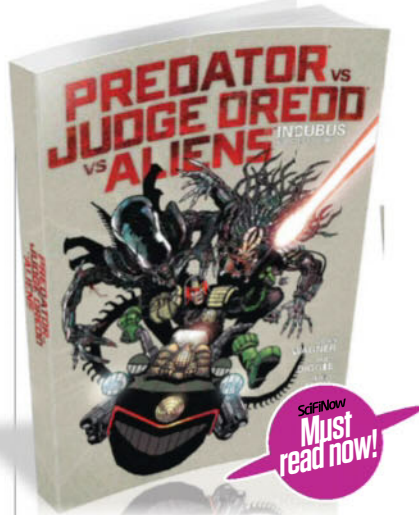
Illegal aliens

The world of gleefully absurd dystopic lawman Judge Dredd has always lent itself particularly well to crossovers. Partly because of the wildly varying tone of the strip, and partly because of its hand-waving approach to chronology, you can drop just about any IP into Mega-City One and it works perfectly. After all, this is a world of aliens, other dimensions, cyborgs, mutants, time travel and even the supernatural.

When it comes to crossovers, 20th Century Fox's *Aliens* and *Predator* franchises aren't exactly sacred. They've battled Superman, Batman, Superman and Batman together, the JLA, Green Lantern, Terminator, Witchblade and Darkness, and of course, each other, on and off since 1991.

Few of these have fared nearly as well as 2002's *Judge Dredd Vs Aliens: Incubus* (by John Wagner and former 2000 AD editor Andy Diggie and artist Henry Flint) and 1997's *Predator Vs Judge Dredd* (by Wagner and artist Enrique Alcatena). Both, in their own way, feel like movies that were never made.

JD Vs A has all the baroque, doomed atmosphere of the *Aliens* sequels (the fatalism of the Dredd universe is a natural fit), with nests of eggs in the ruins of the undercity and demented mutant terrorists using the Xenomorphs as weapons against an oppressive Justice Department.



SciFiNow Must read now!

P Vs JD, meanwhile, feels like a Nineties action movie, as the lantern-jawed future cop teams up with Dutch Schaefer's descendant to track down a lone Predator, hunting Judges in the sweltering Mega-City summer.

The latter is more throwaway than the former, but both are fun. Next time there's a *Predator* movie, there better be a Judge's helmet in the trophy cabinet...

James Hoare

VERDICT ★★★★★

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...
 Eminem/The Punisher
 Fred Van Lente/
 Salvador Larroca
 For obvious reasons this should never be forgotten.



Details Writers: Various **Artists:** Various
Publisher: Marvel/Panini **Price:** £16.99 **Released:** Out now

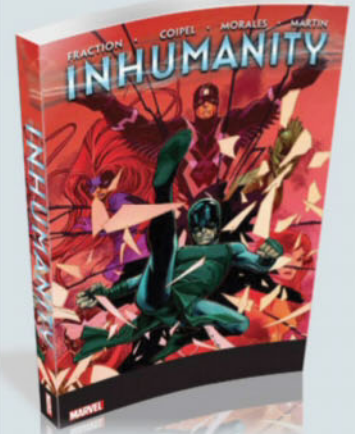
INHUMANITY

Uncanny Inhumans

With *Attilan* – the floating Edgar Rice Burroughs citadel of the Inhumans – destroyed, soundless monarch Black Bolt believed dead and the transformative Terrigen Mist triggering recessive Inhuman genes left, right and centre, the once haughty Inhumans are suddenly a scattering of desperate individuals, hated and feared by those around them. The remnants of the Inhuman royal family are left playing X-Men, racing to their emerging cousins before those who'd seek to do them harm.

After the initial setup with Medusa and Karnak (*Inhumanity* #1-2), the first half of this volume focuses on the much-loved Anya Corazon, aka Spider-Girl, as she works with various Avengers to track down her teacher, who went missing.

The first half of this volume (taken from *Avengers Assemble* #21-25) is a riot of classic Marvel wise cracking and life lessons, and features the welcome return of the demented Toxic Doxie (last seen in *Dark Avengers*). This gives way to a harmless enough romp with *Avengers AI* #7, which then reaches its nadir with *Inhumanity: The Awakening* #1-#2. X-teens Quentin Quire and Pixie team up with Striker and Finesse of the Avengers Academy to help out an emerging Inhuman who is being trolled to suicide on social media. It was



probably written with one eye on Jamie McKelvie and Kieron Gillen's *Young Avengers*, but will be remembered in much the same mental frame as Arsenal's dead-cat cradling drug relapse.

Things stay on the wrong side of cringe with *Inhumanity: Superior Spider-Man* #1, in which the Spidey-inhabiting Doc Ock encourages his underlings to treat firefighters with more respect. It's tonally similar to Marvel's 9/11 benefit *Heroes*, but without the very real tragedy at its core the end result is just sanctimonious.

James Hoare

VERDICT ★★★★★

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...
 Spider Island
 Dan Slott/Humberto Ramos
 Another mass mutation, but this time people are changing... into spider people!



The Architect

SCIFINOW TALKS TO THE FATHER OF CYBERPUNK WILLIAM GIBSON ABOUT TIME TRAVEL, PREDICTING FUTURE TECH AND THE LEGACY OF NEUROMANCER... WORDS JONATHAN HATFULL

3 0 years ago, William Gibson gave us *Neuromancer*, in the process defining cyberpunk, inventing the Matrix and providing the groundwork for future writers, artists and filmmakers. Now, he is looking to our future once again with *The Peripheral*. Split between two futures, it's the story of Flynne, a young woman living in the USA's rural south not long from now, and Netherton, a jaded PR working in London that has seen some sort of economic collapse since Flynne's time.

When Flynne witnesses a murder in what she believes is a game she's testing, Netherton realises that she was actually seeing his present. He needs her to find out who's responsible, and as the pair bounce back and forth between their realities they discover more and more about their lives and themselves in the process.

There's a lot going on in *The Peripheral*, both in terms of themes and plot. What was the starting point?

It occurred to me that I hadn't actually written sci-fi set in the future in the 21st Century, so that became the project, but I had no story [laughs]! I had no characters, and so I began the process, and found that I had a girl walking down a shabby hillside in rural America to meet her brother, and initially I didn't know when she was doing that. But I sort of let it roll, and so Flynne and her world began to emerge.

Was part of the appeal in exploring the differences between people living in two time zones?

I think part of the impulse was that I've always been fascinated by the way in which we seem to regard the inhabitants of the past as yokels and semi-sophisticates [laughs]. Mere savages! And yet we often seem to regard the inhabitants of the future as decadent and rather helpless, pathetic creatures who weaken easily, and I've always thought that's an interesting aspect of science fiction. Having been a huge fan of [TV series] *Deadwood*, one of the things I loved was the way that we enter this utterly familiar cosy American construct of the main street of the little Western town, and our expectations are that it will be inhabited by yokels, and instead there are these monstrous, incredibly clever flesh-eating scam artists waiting to take anyone apart. So once I had the two time frames and some sort of focus I was pretty sure it was moving in that direction.

Are you aware that you're giving social commentary when writing, touching on current issues?

Imaginary futures can only be made out of the immediate present and the historical past. There's

nothing else to work with; we have no access to the real future. If I did read *Neuromancer* today, I know from experience that what I see was around in the mid-Eighties. Things that caused anxiety or excitement, and that's what comes up through whatever process I've come to have for writing these things. As I was writing *The Peripheral*, I would occasionally look at the growing pile of subject matter and think "Oh! This is really rather grim!" But then I go back to the work where the characters are having their lives in spite of it all.

How is it now, looking back at how influential *Neuromancer* was in terms of books and films?

I've never seen it myself as being that influential; I think *Blade Runner* was at least as influential on design and even architecture as *2001*. A novel is not a visual artefact, so it can't really do that. Where I do see it is the number of people who introduce themselves at signings and say that they read *Neuromancer* at 13, and that's why they've had a wonderful career in digital something or other. Certainly it was the last thing I was thinking of!

Have you found predicting future technology or advances any easier?

I've always assumed that anything anyone writes along those lines starts to become obsolete even before it's finished. Imaginary futures are like ice cream cones on a hot day. But for me, even that had always been part of the appeal of sci-fi. When I discovered sci-fi myself in the early Sixties, and I was first reading, a lot of the sci-fi I could find had been written in the late Forties, but part of my pleasure in enjoying it at that age was "Wow, they got it wrong! You can see when they wrote this, they had no idea about this... they completely failed to imagine that!" So when I'm writing, I'll occasionally sit back and think, "Wow, I wonder what I'm totally failing to notice in the world today that will become the huge issue." If a time traveller had come back just as I'd finished *Neuromancer* and I'd said, "Read this, what huge technological thing is going on today that I'm missing?" And if the time traveller had said to me, "Well, you know, you've been burning an awful lot of hydrocarbons for a long time now, that's going to turn out to be the big one..." I'd have been like, "What? What can I do with that?" It's the unanticipated results of technology that affect us most often.



The Peripheral by William Gibson is available to buy now, published by Viking.

“ANYTHING ANYONE WRITES ALONG THOSE LINES BEGINS TO OBSOLETE EVEN BEFORE IT'S FINISHED”
WILLIAM GIBSON



Gibson on the screen

THE CYBERPUNK KING HAS BEEN TRICKY TO ADAPT...

JOHNNY MNEMONIC (1995)

Keanu Reeves starred in this messy but insane adaptation of Gibson's short story about a fugitive courier carrying wanted data in his head. Oh, and there's a dolphin in it, too.



NEW ROSE HOTEL (1998)

Abel Ferrara adapted Gibson's short story, well, badly in 1998, casting Willem Dafoe and Christopher Walken as two agents trying to convince a genius to defect from his company.



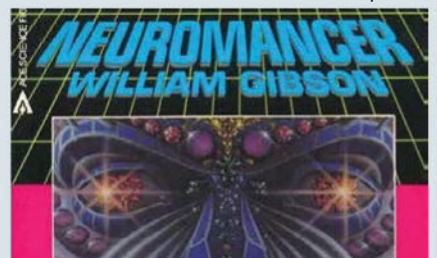
THE X-FILES (1998-2000)

Gibson wrote two episodes with Tom Maddox: the effective 'Kill Switch' and the downright awful 'First Person Shooter', although the latter did come in the pretty dire seventh season.



NEUROMANCER (TBC)

Vincenzo Natali has been attached to direct Gibson's masterpiece for years, but the film is no closer to happening. "I wish it were otherwise," Gibson tells us. "But there's no news at this point."



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UNCOVERED **108**

AN IMAGINE
MONTHLY

THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO BATTLESTAR GALACTICA

FEW SERIES COMMAND THE CULT FOLLOWING OF BATTLESTAR GALACTICA. THE SERIES FIRST AIRED IN 1978 TO RECORD VIEWING NUMBERS, GOING ON TO BE CANCELLED, REVIVED AND REIMAGINED. SCIFINOW CAUGHT UP WITH CAPTAIN APOLLO HIMSELF, RICHARD HATCH, TO GET AN INSIGHT INTO THE MAKING OF THIS SCI-FI EPIC...

WORDS KRYSTAL SIM

"There are those who believe that life here, began out there. Far across the universe, with tribes of humans who may have been the forefathers of the Egyptians, or the Toltecs, or the Mayans... Some believe that there may yet be brothers of man who even now fight to survive, somewhere beyond the heavens."

1977 was a big year for science fiction. The unprecedented success of *Star Wars* made the genre more bankable than it had ever been, and studios jumped at the chance to take advantage of this appetite for all things sci-fi.

Paramount looked to *Star Trek*, and within two years *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* had revived the franchise. Meanwhile, television writer and producer Glen Larson saw the perfect opportunity to revive an old idea of his, called Adam's Ark. It was influenced in part by Erich von Däniken's *Chariots Of The Gods* (1968), which hypothesised that ancient human civilisations may have been gifted technology by aliens, as well as elements of the Mormon faith.

Somewhere far off in the universe, 12 colonies of humans migrated from the dying world of Kobol and found new planets to populate. For 1,000 years, the colonies have been at war with a mechanical race known as the Cylons, who offer humanity peace only to spring a trap with the help of their power-hungry human liaison, Gaius Baltar (John Colicos).



The colonies are wiped out, as is most of the Colonial Fleet save the Battlestar Galactica under the command of Admiral Adama (Lorne Greene), now leader of a 'rag-tag fugitive fleet' on a quest to find the fabled 13th Colony – Earth. They set a course into deep space with limited resources, fleeing the Cylons and looking for clues to the whereabouts of Earth.

The series was fast-tracked into production, shot at Universal and aired on ABC in September 1978. Lead actor Richard Hatch, who played ace pilot Apollo, says he turned down the role at first.

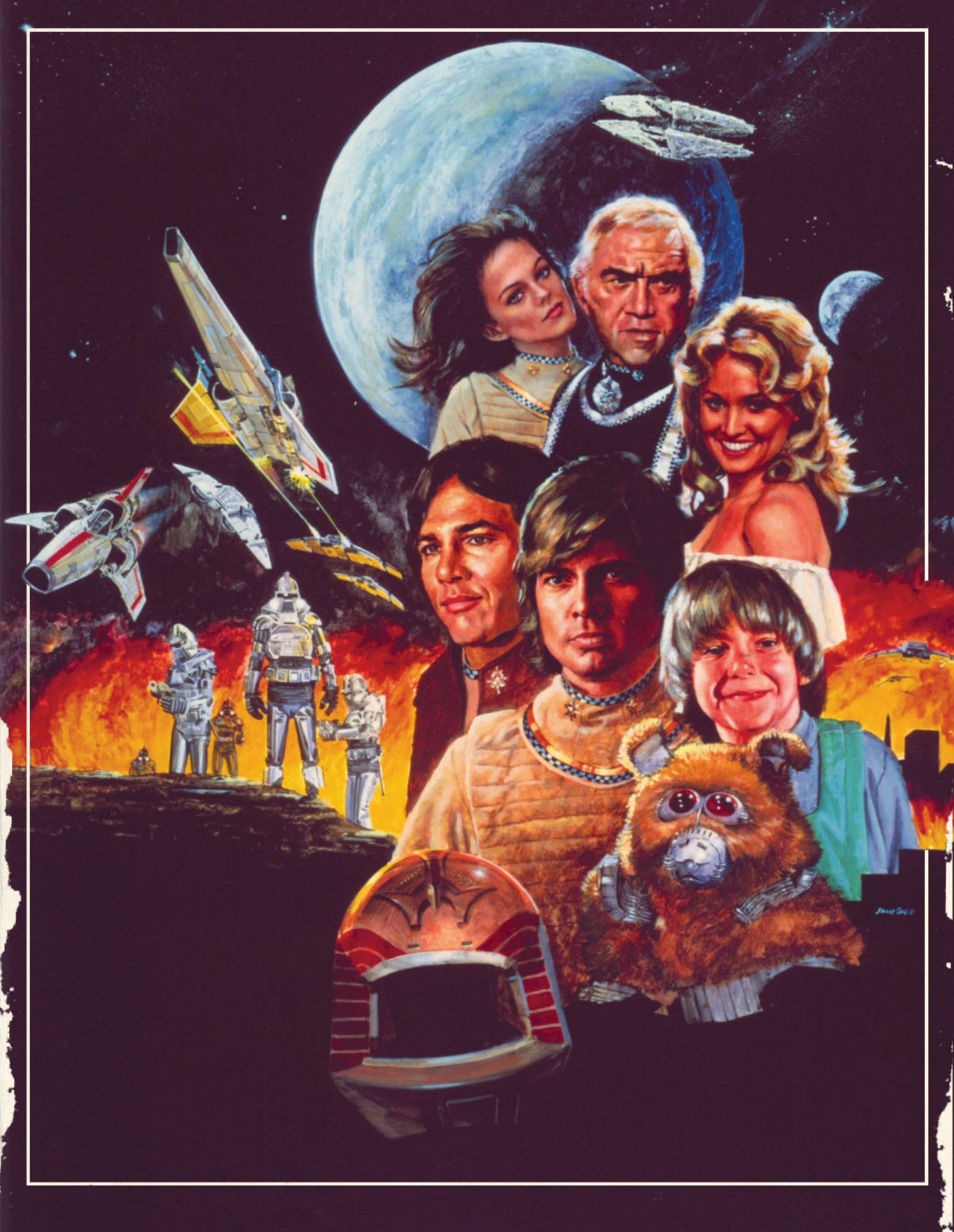
"I had turned down the audition because I just loved *Star Wars*, and I thought this was maybe going to be a

cheap rip-off. Then 12 months later they couldn't seem to find the Captain Apollo that they wanted, and Glen Larson had seen me in *Whatever Happened To The Class Of '65*, and thought I was perfect.

"So here I am, a starving actor, and he's taking me out to wine and dine me, trying to convince me to be part of the biggest, most expensive production in TV history, which every actor in Hollywood wanted to do. I found myself in what we call the 'magic hour' where they had to make a decision, and they offered me the role. I was surprised – I didn't expect them to hire me."

Production was such a whirlwind that he was given the part on the same day he had to arrive on set. "The minute my agent called me, I had to jump in the car, and within an hour I was on set getting ready to shoot. I've never been so overwhelmed by a production. I had no idea it was this big or important, and I truly was terrified. And my name was at the top – I thought, 'How do I live up to these expectations?' So it was a pretty scary, terrifying day, but I got through it, and after meeting Lorne Greene all was well. Dirk Benedict (Starbuck) and Herb Jefferson Jr (Boomer) and I bonded quickly – and the rest is history."

Captain Apollo and his companions Starbuck and Boomer were Viper pilots – the critical line of defence between the Colonial Fleet and the Cylons. On the bridge, Admiral Adama (Greene) commanded the Galactica with the support of Colonel Tigh (Terry



➤ Carter) and his daughter Athena Adama (Maren Jensen). Athena's rival for Starbuck's affections was medical officer Cassiopeia (Laurette Spang), and Anne Lockhart joined the cast midway through the season as Battlestar Pegasus Viper pilot Sheba.

The pilot was three episodes long, essentially a made-for-TV movie. Larson had wanted to make a miniseries, but ABC pushed for a weekly show, cutting lead time significantly. It was a hectic period, and hype for the new series was massive, according to Hatch.

"It got the largest audience in TV history for a sci-fi show. 65 million people watched the pilot. An aircraft carrier admiral once told me that they brought their ship into port just so that they could pick up the signal to watch it. It was an amazing time."

Every show needs a great villain, and the Cylons were menacing foes. Larson had envisioned them as reptilian, but the network wouldn't allow real creatures to be killed off so frequently in prime time. The Cylons therefore became robots, created by a reptilian civilisation which, so Baltar states, was overwhelmed by its own technology and died out.

Legendary illustrator Ralph McQuarrie designed concept artwork for *Battlestar*, including a first draft of the Cylons' appearance. His vision was a little more akin to a surgical droid from *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980). Artists Andrew Probert and Joe Johnson then created new designs for the mechanical menace, with Johnson incorporating elements of Samurai armour into his, while Probert took inspiration from Greek warriors, including a skirt and a sword.

Probert's look triumphed, including the iconic red eye that oscillated back and forth, coupled with remarkable sound design by Oscar-winning sound editor Peter Berkos. He used a vocoder in tandem with a synthesiser, and a single actor portrayed all the Cylon voices to keep the sound consistent and monotone. Stunt performers, and occasionally football or basketball players, were hired to make the Cylons every inch the imposing threat they were written to be.

Battlestar Galactica didn't just draw on science fiction iconography; it was also inspired by antiquity. The names of the colonies, like Caprica, Piscara and Sagitara, were pulled from the signs of the Zodiac. The Viper pilots' helmets were inspired by Egyptian headdresses, call signs like Athena and Apollo were taken from Greek mythology, and exterior shots set on Kobol were even filmed on location in Giza. The look of the show was distinctive, which Hatch says he holds dear.

"I have a particular love for the design of the original show because it was very unique, iconic and cool. There was something very cool about those jackets, and I loved the Egyptian and Mayan motif that was woven throughout. I love the look of it and the visual aspects of it. John Dykstra was the special effects supervisor on *Star Wars*, and was ours when we started, so he also was able to bring a lot of very powerful visuals and dynamics, which had never been seen before on television."

The back story was also very dark: 12 planets are wiped out, with the few survivors left on the run, and chasing what could be a myth. *Star Wars* might have had a fascist Empire, but *Battlestar Galactica* was about ➤



BATTLESTAR GALACTICA (1978-81)

COMPLETE GUIDE

BATTLESTAR BEHIND THE SCENES

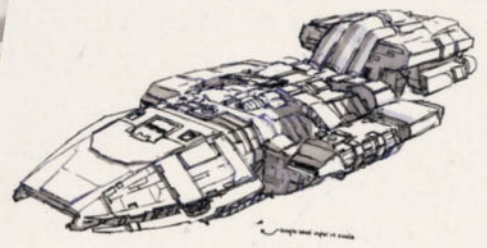
The pictures here represent just a small selection of the hundreds of images in Aurum Press's fully authorised *Battlestar Galactica Vault: The Complete History Of The Series, 1978-2012* by Paul Ruditis.

This lovingly presented guide is a treasure trove for all things *Battlestar*, containing within its pages hundreds of never-before-seen images, and concept art from the iconic Ralph McQuarrie, as well as annotated scripts and storyboards, and even ten pieces of memorabilia for each reader. *Battlestar Galactica Vault* is available now for £20 from Aurum Press.

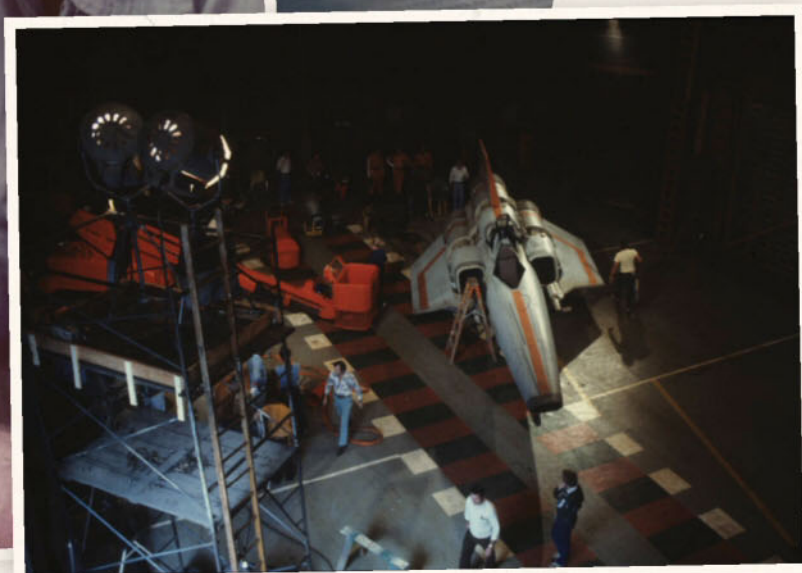
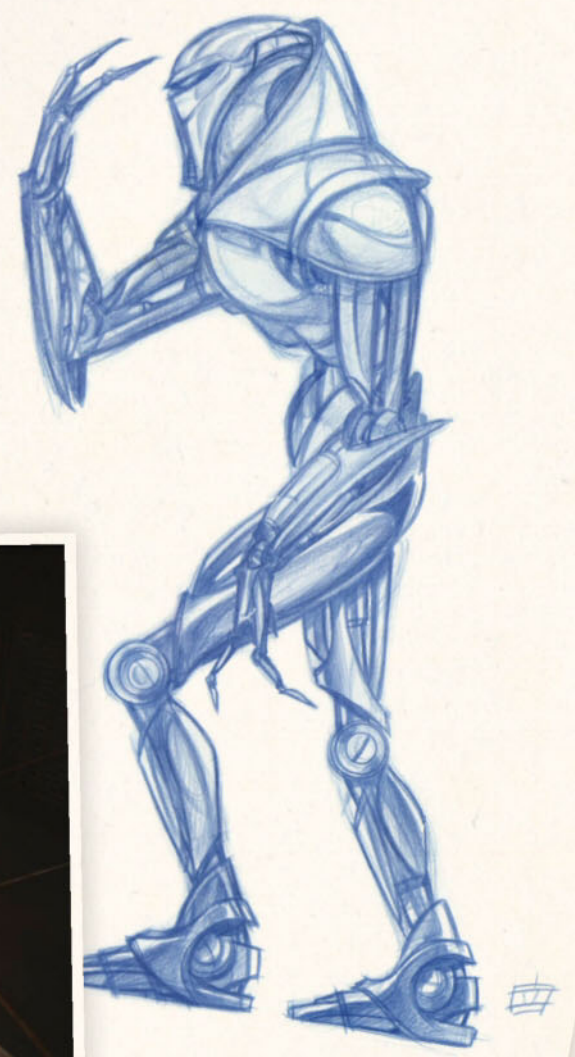
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LAURENCE J. BROWN - 1978-1981 / 1978-1981
GALACTICA #3 Richard C. Leung
Feb 1/2003



"LORNE GREENE SET THE TONE; NOBODY WAS GOING TO PULL RANK"

RICHARD HATCH

➤ the very extinction of humanity. And yet, the show was unbelievably upbeat and hopeful in the face of this predicament – almost jarringly so. Hatch believes that the bonds he and his co-stars formed on set helped set the tone for the series.

"There's a lot of infighting on sets or competition, as actors want more screen time. But on *Battlestar* we formed a family, and I love projects that deal with that. This was about an extended family surviving a holocaust. It was a powerful, dramatic story that showed people pulling together, watching each others' backs and somehow surviving the impossible."

Likewise, the cast and crew faced a near-impossible task in bringing the show to life. The 18-month shoot on the backlot of Universal saw the actors filming for almost seven days a week, sometimes for 16-hour days. The man who held them all together was Lorne Greene, the Canadian actor who played patriarch Ben Cartwright in long-running western series *Bonanza*. As his on-screen son, Hatch spent a lot of time with Greene, and appreciated his composure.

"I grew up watching *Bonanza*, so getting to play his son – I mean, wow. Lorne Greene was such a down-to-earth, genuine human being, and he was the most

experienced actor there – he was the captain of the ship. Lorne set the tone; nobody was going to pull rank, nobody was going to play games or manipulate to get more screen time. It was all about us coming together, and he orchestrated that."

Episodes ranged from gunslinging western stories 'The Lost Warrior' and *The Guns Of Navarone*-inspired 'The Gun On Ice Planet Zero' to disaster mini-movie 'Fire In Space' and murder mystery 'Murder On The Rising Star'. Some worked and others didn't, but the stories were ambitious to say the least.

When rival network CBS rearranged its Sunday night line-up, *Battlestar Galactica* found itself up against *All In The Family*, and understandably failed to topple the established sitcom in the ratings. The show's expensive budget spelled trouble, and it ended after 24 episodes with 'The Hand Of God'. Fans were furious, but Hatch says he wasn't entirely surprised. ➤

Regular guest voice Patrick Macnee as the charismatic Count Iblis, with Lieutenant Sheba (Anne Lockhart).



Cassiopeia (Laurette Spang) keeps a straight face in spite of the costumes.



Unlike its successor, *Battlestar Galactica* wasn't afraid to keep things light-hearted.



TOP TEN THINGS YOU NEVER KNEW



1. Television history

The pilot 'Saga Of A Star World' had the biggest budget of any television show at that time – \$7 million. Subsequent episodes cost around \$750,000 to make.



2. Oh boy...

Donald P. Bellisario, creator of *Quantum Leap*, wrote many episodes of the original *Battlestar Galactica*, including the season finale 'The Hand Of God'.



3. Admiral Serina

Jane Seymour was offered the role of Admiral Helena Cain in Ronald D. Moore's series, but declined. Former *Star Trek* actress Michelle Forbes took on the part instead.



4. Call me Ishmael

While character names like Apollo and Athena were taken from mythology, both Starbuck and Boomer are characters from Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*.



5. Little Miss Muffit

Muffit II, the robotic daggit Boxey is given to replace his beloved pet, was actually played by a four-year-old chimpanzee in a suit. Her name was Evolution, or 'Evie' for short.



Fighter pilots Apollo (Richard Hatch) and Starbuck (Dirk Benedict) were the two leads.



The primary adversaries, the Cylons were especially challenging foes.



Battlestar Galactica brought space adventure into audience's living rooms, and was darker than a mere *Star Wars* rip-off.

ABOUT BATTLESTAR GALACTICA



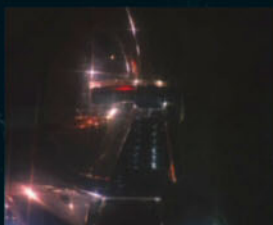
6. McQuarrie's concepts

Rolph McQuarrie produced 24 paintings to illustrate *Battlestar Galactica*'s pilot. His poster was heavily inspired John Solie's work once the actors had been cast.



7. You rang?

The Addams Family's Lurch, Ted Cassidy, first provided the voice for the Cylon Imperious Leader in the TV movie pilot. He can be heard on the early trailer, but was ultimately replaced by Patrick Macnee.



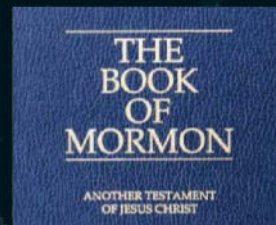
8. By your command

The Cylons were first written as blind creatures rather than robots, so designer Andrew Probert's concept for their helmets included a scanner – the now-iconic red eye.



9. Studio wars

20th Century Fox sued Universal for copyright infringement. The studio claimed they'd stolen ideas from *Star Wars*, prompting a countersuit that *Star Wars* had stolen from *Silent Running*.



10. Book of Mormon

Battlestar Galactica draws on some elements of the Mormon faith, including lost tribes and the Quorum of the Twelve ruling council.

GUEST STARRING

Our favourite guests



Patrick Macnee Imperious Leader/ Count Iblis

Macnee is scattered throughout *Battlestar Galactica*. His enigmatic narration about the origins of life kick-off each episode, and he voiced the Cylons' Imperious Leader. In 'War Of The Gods', the actor appears in the flesh as the charismatic Count Iblis, a man with telekinetic and telepathic powers who charms the crew and delivers Gaius Baltar to them. The over-the-top dialogue and Macnee's absolute sincerity are charming, even if it does go a bit too far with its whole angels and demons theme.



Britt Ekland Tenna

Britt Ekland on *Battlestar Galactica*? It happened. The *Wicker Man* actress appears as one of three identical clones in 'The Gun On Ice Planet Zero', where Apollo and a team of criminals try to take out a lethal cannon the *Galactica* must pass in range of. Obviously, ladies' man Starbuck develops a thing for her, and it's impossible not to roll your eyes at his sadness at leaving three versions of her behind.



Lloyd Bridges Commander Cain

While perhaps better known for comedic turns in parody films *Airplane!* and *Hot Shots!*, Lloyd Bridges could do heroic, boy howdy. He guest stars in one of the strongest two-part episodes of the season, 'The Living Legend', which tells you everything you need to know about the gutsy Commander's character. He's reckless and unpredictable, but he gets results, and Bridges perfectly encapsulates the role of daring military leader, chasing victory no matter the cost.



Fred Astaire Chameleon

Another surprising guest actor, Hollywood legend Fred Astaire asked for a role as his grandchildren liked the series. In 'The Man With Nine Lives' he plays an ageing con-man called Chameleon who claims to be Starbuck's father. The orphaned pilot is instantly taken with his new 'dad', but Apollo suspects he's not telling the whole truth. It was the last time Astaire danced on screen.



Brock Peters Chief Opposer Solon

Another great character actor, known to *Star Trek* fans as Fleet Admiral Cartwright and Benjamin Sisko's father Joseph. Peters made an appearance as the lawyer for the prosecution in 'Murder On The Rising Star', in which Starbuck lands himself on trial for the murder of a rival Triad player. Not a huge role, but his gravitas makes it noteworthy.

➤ "We were taking almost 10-12 days per episode where a normal show takes seven, so it was a very challenging production. I think part of why *Battlestar* didn't continue at that time was because the budget was so huge and it took so long to film. They were trying to make a movie each week. Technology was not at that point yet, but it was a very heroic year, and other channels did their best to bring us down. Nevertheless, we were probably the highest-rated science fiction show of all time in terms of numbers and what we accomplished.

"In those days sci-fi wasn't as accepted as it is now, and they weren't used to dealing with those kinds of volatile budgets that a space show sometimes brings. Today, the industry recognises that sci-fi is one of those rare genres that seems to build an audience over time instead of diminishing. *Star Trek* became a big hit in syndication, and *Battlestar* has increased its fanbase every year from generation to generation."

ABC quickly approached Glen Larson to revive the show, and so *Galactica 1980* was born. Adama and Boomer were the only original characters to return, however, and the series tanked after just ten episodes, failing to capture the excitement of its first season. In the Nineties, Hatch tried to revive the series himself, even creating an action-packed trailer called 'The Second Coming', featuring original cast members John Colicos and George Murdock (Dr Salik).

"I'd been pitching to [Universal] about a new series, but they were a little confused about how that might

look. So at a time when nobody was doing trailers – because if you made a trailer it's because you already had a movie – I went out and put one together. We played it at Comic-Con and got an eight-minute standing ovation. We got a call from Harvey Weinstein at Miramax thinking that if we had the trailer, we must have the movie. It helped reinvigorate the fanbase.

"Bryan Singer and Tom DeSanto at one point got a deal to do it, but that got dropped when they had to go work on *X2*. And then ultimately Ron Moore got involved and made the reimagined series with that wonderful cast. I invited him, Glen, Tom and Bryan to a convention up at Universal to talk to the fans about what they wanted to do. We had this big room where Ron played the new series trailer, and it was so different from the original that the audience was incredibly cold at that moment."

Very few shows enjoy a second chance, but *Battlestar Galactica* returned as a miniseries in 2003, and was picked up as a full series in 2004, running for four seasons to critical acclaim. Characters like Apollo and Boomer were back, but with a twist, the most notable being Katee Sackhoff's role as Starbuck, reimagined as a woman.

The new series had an even more diverse cast and took that dark back story to a grittier place than the original show could for its time slot and era. Hatch was invited to join as guest star Tom Zarek – a role about a million miles away from the clean-cut Viper pilot he first played back in 1978.

John Colicos as Baltar, who betrayed humanity to the Cylons.



Starbuck wows a Cylon Centurion with his luxurious locks.



BATTLESTAR GALACTICA (1978-81)

COMPLETE GUIDE

"IT WAS A VERY CHALLENGING PRODUCTION... THEY WERE TRYING TO MAKE A MOVIE EACH WEEK"

RICHARD HATCH

"Even though it was very different, there was a vision. Here was somebody that knew what they were doing and had a really clear vision of where he wanted to take it, and I was really impressed. I got to know Ron, and he said to me, 'The series has been picked up, and I have one-time spot here, but it could turn into an ongoing part, and it's the role of Tom Zarek – a political revolutionary.'

"I couldn't believe they were actually inviting me to come on the show, but I loved the role. Every step created the next miracle. That convention, getting to know Ron, him taking a chance on me and letting me come in and play one of my favourite roles of all time. Zarek is an enigmatic and complex character – most of the characters in the new series were never black and white; they were morally conflicted characters, which is what made that show get the critical acclaim it did."

Despite the cheesy dialogue and feathered hair, *Battlestar Galactica* was a show about survival, family and hope. For a series with so few episodes, it has

seeped into pop culture so completely that the mere mention of 'Cylon' invokes memories of that voice dispassionately saying 'By your command', as well as the iconic designs of the uniforms and ships.

"The original show wasn't as dark or political or edgy" says Hatch. "It was more about family, and it was a show that the whole family could sit down and watch together. This was humanity going through the most intense, challenging, life-and-death circumstances, and to this day they're discovering it and falling in love with it. I feel very blessed, because you can be in a lot of shows that are forgettable. They're entertaining at the time, but you forget them, but for whatever reason, *Battlestar's* heart and energy touched people deeply.

"There's never been a one-year series that's made that kind of powerful impression or lasting impact. We're all fans of something, and when you're a fan you just want more of it. It's amazing when people come up to us and tell us their stories about what the show meant to them, and how it helped them get through challenging times in their lives. How often do you get the chance to be part of something like that?"



Andrew Probert's distinctive Cylon Centurion design remains iconic, especially its menacing red eye.

BATTLEFIELD GALACTICA

Where it all went wrong for *Galactica* 1980

If you know your television tropes, you'll know of the Cousin Oliver phenomenon. When *The Brady Bunch* introduced a young cousin in the fifth season to attract younger viewers the show was soon cancelled.

Cousin Oliver is in *Galactica* 1980. Okay, so it's actually Robbie Rist, the actor who played him, but the jinx remains. Mere weeks after *Battlestar Galactica* was cancelled by ABC, fierce letter-writing campaigns protesting against the decision gathered pace, so they contacted Larson to revive the show.

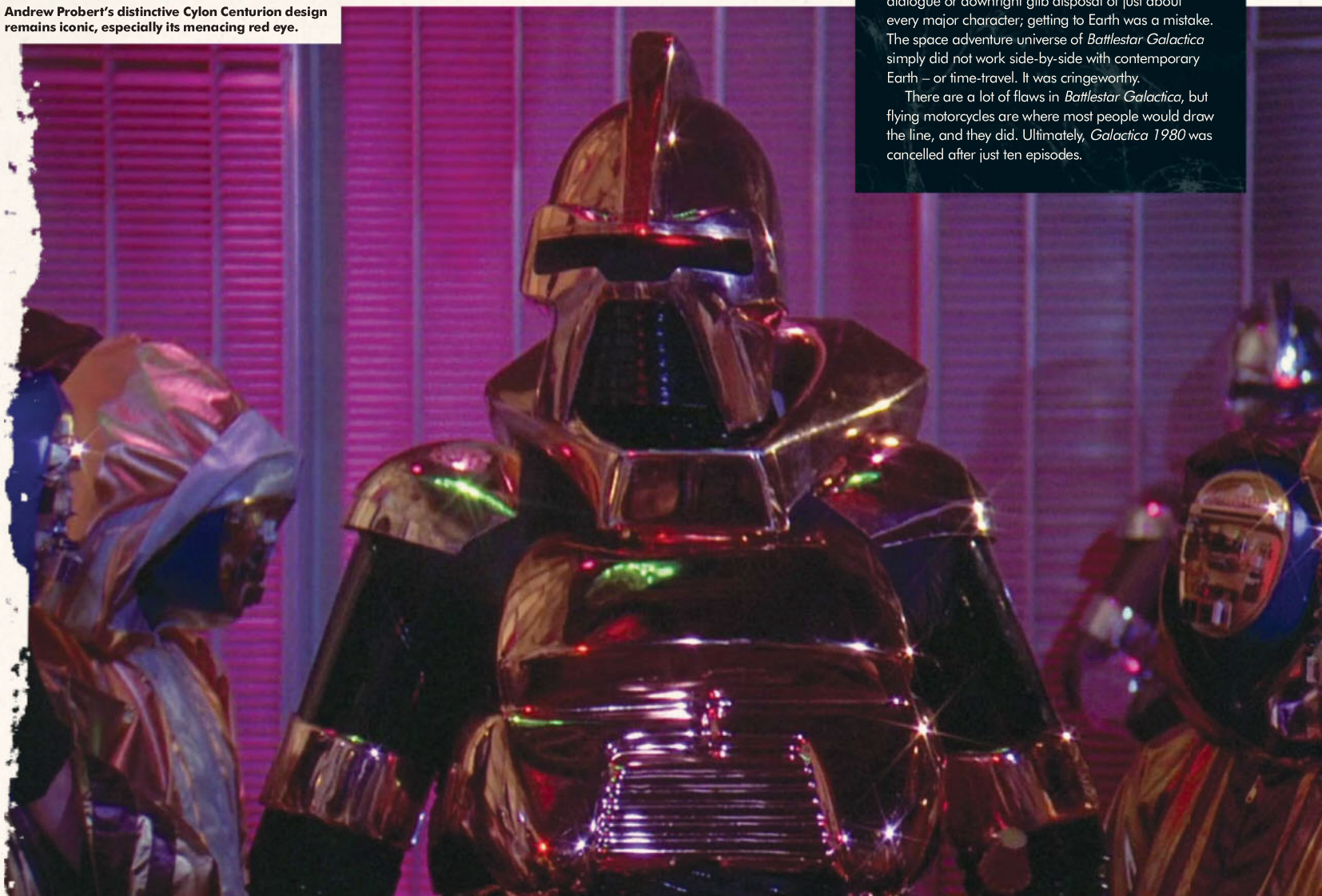
The idea was to do a spin-off, reunite the cast and get the *Galactica* crew to Earth. However, with Dirk Benedict and Richard Hatch unavailable the story was set 30 years on from the first series' finale, thus explaining away the missing cast members.

Galactica reaches Earth, but realises all too late that the planet isn't advanced enough to defend itself from the Cylon forces. Creepy child prodigy Doctor Zee (Rist) says they must bring Earth to a level of technology that can help the fight against the Cylons.

Apollo and Starbuck replacements Troy (Kent McCord) and Dillon (Barry van Dyke) are sent to the US to share technology, and Commander Xavier (Richard Lynch) argues for the use of time travel to kick-start a technological revolution.

The problem isn't just the confused logic, clunky dialogue or downright glib disposal of just about every major character; getting to Earth was a mistake. The space adventure universe of *Battlestar Galactica* simply did not work side-by-side with contemporary Earth – or time-travel. It was cringeworthy.

There are a lot of flaws in *Battlestar Galactica*, but flying motorcycles are where most people would draw the line, and they did. Ultimately, *Galactica* 1980 was cancelled after just ten episodes.



IN 1975, STEVEN SPIELBERG TURNED PETER BENCHLEY'S NOVEL INTO A FILM. ALMOST 40 YEARS ON, IT REMAINS ONE OF THE MOST ICONIC AND INFLUENTIAL MONSTER MOVIES EVER MADE. SCIFINOW LOOKS BACK AT THE MAKING OF THE FISHY HIT THAT MADE A GENERATION SCARED TO GO INTO THE WATER...

WORDS POPPY-JAY PALMER

JAWS



If you are a human with a TV and a functioning head, the chances are that you have seen *Jaws*. Even those select few who haven't seen it will know what it is; they've heard John Williams' Main Title theme, and they know about the bigger boat. The even smaller group of people who don't know what *Jaws* is are probably either cave people, sewer people, or astronauts who were sent into space in the Sixties and never came back.

Jaws started life as a novel of the same name by the then little-known author Peter Benchley. Inspiration for the story came in the form of the real-life Jersey Shore shark attacks of 1916, in which a great white terrorised vacationers up the New Jersey coast between Beach Haven and Raritan Bay over a 12-day period. In all, the attacks resulted in four fatalities.

The novel was brought to the attention of Universal producers Richard D Zanuck and David Brown when it appeared in the literature section of *Cosmopolitan*. The magazine's book editor gave a detailed description of the plot, ending with 'might make a good movie'. A night of non-stop reading and \$175,000 later, and they had acquired the film rights.

A few other directors were considered before Steven Spielberg, including John Sturges of *The Magnificent Seven* fame. Dick Richards was hired to lead the project, but ended up being dropped rather comically (though not for him) after repeatedly referring to the shark as a whale. Eventually, Spielberg was chosen to direct the picture.

Not many of the main cast members were Spielberg's first choice. For Chief Brody he wanted Robert Duvall, and Lee Marvin and Sterling Hayden were

"IT WAS SPIELBERG'S VISION THAT THE SHARK BE THE STAR"

approached for the role of Quint, but they both turned it down. Jon Voight, Timothy Bottoms, Joel Grey and Jeff Bridges were all considered for Hooper.

It was Spielberg's vision from the start that the shark would be the star of the movie, with the rest of the characters needing to be relatively anonymous by contrast. Still unable to find his chief of police, Spielberg got talking about the film with a little-known actor called Roy Scheider, and told him about his trouble finding the right person to play Chief Brody. Scheider enjoyed hearing about the plot of the film so much that he asked, 'What about me?' Spielberg was reluctant at first, worried that Scheider would play Brody as a tough guy, but he took the plunge and hired him. His leap of faith ended up being a positive one; the most famous line in the film – "You're going to need a bigger boat" – wasn't originally in the script. Scheider improved it on the spot. The American Film Institute ranked Brody's line 33rd in a list of the top 100 movie quotations in American cinema.

Nine days before Spielberg was due to start shooting, he still hadn't found his Hooper and Quint. Zanuck and Brown suggested Robert Shaw for Quint after working with him in *The Sting*. Shaw didn't like the book, however, and was reluctant to give the film a chance. Since appearing as the shark hunter, he's confessed that his wife, actress Mary Ure, and his secretary were the ones who urged him to go for it.

It was George Lucas who suggested Richard Dreyfuss for the part of marine biologist Matt Hooper, although again he initially turned it down. Shortly after refusing Spielberg, he saw his own performance in Canadian comedy-drama *The Apprenticeship Of Duddy Kravitz*. Terrified that no one would want to hire him after it came out, he was suddenly all too keen to jump on board with *Jaws*.

The three leads had some memorable scenes between them, but the opener also made a huge impact. It featured Chrissie, an unsuspecting skinny dipper played by Susan Backlinie who became the first of the shark's victims. Backlinie was a stuntwoman who was hired mainly because she knew how to swim and was willing to appear in the buff. Spielberg was uneasy at the fact that she wasn't a trained actress, but he ended up loving her.

Backlinie's role pretty much just involved being savaged and drowned. At first, the crew wanted to attach her to an electric wench that would pull her under the water, but Backlinie feared that it could have actually killed her. In the end she had cables running from each side of her. Backlinie threw her arms in the air while the crew tugged on the cables to make it seem more violent. She also re-recorded the screams in a studio, leaning over a basin while Spielberg poured water over the head. It took three days to film the sequence, but Backlinie's efforts led to the opening scene of *Jaws* becoming one of the most iconic in monster-movie history.

Setting out to make a film about a shark without using CGI or actually training proved to be asking for trouble, and was ➤



Film

RUNNING TIME:

124 minutes

RELEASE DATE:

20 June 1975

DIRECTOR:

Steven Spielberg

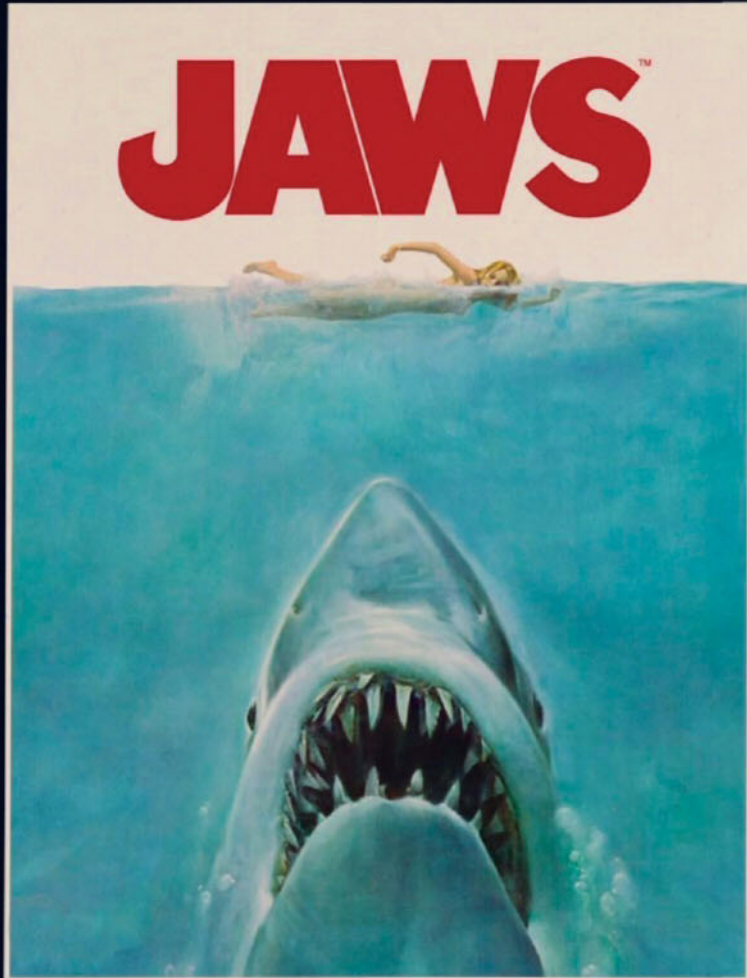
WRITERS: Peter Benchley, Carl Gottlieb

CAST: Roy Scheider, Robert Shaw, Richard Dreyfuss, Lorraine Gary, Murray Hamilton

About

Independence Day weekend is approaching and vacationers are flocking to the idyllic Amity Island, but something nasty is lurking in the water. After a swimmer's remains wash up on the beach, Police Chief Martin Brody starts a one-man mission to find the shark that did it. He tries to close the beaches, but the mayor overrules him – a mistake that results in more painful, bloody deaths. Brody decides that enough is enough, and with the help of marine biologist Quint and professional shark hunter Hooper, he ventures out into the ocean in search of the deadliest threat of his career: a great white shark.

*The terrifying motion picture
from the terrifying No.1 best seller.*



ROY SCHEIDER **ROBERT SHAW** **RICHARD DREYFUSS**
JAWS

Co-starring LORRAINE GARY • MURRAY HAMILTON • A ZANUCK/BROWN PRODUCTION
Screenplay by PETER BENCHLEY and CARL GOTTLIEB • Based on the novel by PETER BENCHLEY • Music by JOHN WILLIAMS
Directed by STEVEN SPIELBERG • Produced by RICHARD D. ZANUCK and DAVID BROWN • A UNIVERSAL PICTURE •
TECHNICOLOR® PANAVISION® **PG** PARENTAL GUIDANCE SUGGESTED
SOME MATERIAL MAY NOT BE SUITABLE FOR PRE-TEENAGERS ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK AVAILABLE ON MCA RECORDS & TAPES
...MAY BE TOO INTENSE FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN



CLASSIC QUOTES

"IT'S ALL PSYCHOLOGICAL. YOU YELL, 'BARRACUDA,' EVERYBODY SAYS, 'HUH, WHAT?' YOU YELL, 'SHARK,' WE'RE GOT A PANIC ON OUR HANDS ON THE FOURTH OF JULY"

MAYOR VAUGHN

"THAT'S SOME BAD HAT, HARRY"

CHIEF BRODY

"HE'S EATING HIS WAY RIGHT THROUGH THAT LINE!"

CHIEF BRODY

"YOU SCREW AROUND WITH THESE TANKS AND THEY ARE GOING TO BLOW UP"

HOOPER

"THIS IS NOT THE TIME OR THE PLACE TO PERFORM SOME SORT OF HALF-ASSED AUTOPSY ON A FISH"

MAYOR VAUGHN

"SMILE, YOU SON OF A BITCH!"

CHIEF BRODY

"I THINK I AM FAMILIAR WITH THE FACT THAT YOU ARE GOING TO IGNORE THIS PROBLEM UNTIL IT SWIMS UP AND BITES YOU IN THE ASS"

HOOPER

"I DON'T NEED THIS WORKING-CLASS HERO CRAP!"

HOOPER

"WHAT ARE YOU, SOME KIND OF HALF-ASSED ASTRONAUT?"

QUINT

"CAGE GOES IN THE WATER, YOU GO IN THE WATER. SHARK'S IN THE WATER. OUR SHARK"

QUINT



• Clockwise from top left: Roy Scheider was cast as Chief Brody, despite initial reservations from Spielberg; the infamous opening sequence; another one bites the dust; Robert Shaw as Quint.

➤ made even harder by the fact that it was the Seventies. Things went wrong on set almost daily. Technical difficulties with the mechanical sharks led to Spielberg rechristening one of them 'Bruce' – after his lawyer – and 'the great white turd'.

"When I hear the word 'Jaws', I just think of a period in my life when I was much younger than I am now," said Spielberg in the 1995 documentary *The Making Of Jaws*. "When I was younger I was more courageous, or more stupid. I'm not sure which. So when I think of *Jaws* I think of courage and stupidity, and I think of both of those things existing underwater."

Three sharks were made for the film, costing a whopping \$250,000 each. They were all specially designed with different functions; one didn't have a left side, one didn't have a right side, and one was fully skinned. The first time the crew tried out the shark it sank to the bottom of the sea. This became a recurring theme. The technical people earned the name 'The Special Defects Department' from Spielberg, perhaps only half-jokingly. Luckily, *Jaws* was filmed on Martha's Vineyard, an island just south of Cape Cod in Massachusetts. The sea around the island, even 12 miles off the coastline, was only 30 feet deep, if

that. If a shark stopped working and sank to the bottom, they'd just go down and fetch it, and try again.



It wasn't only the sharks that wouldn't float. Whilst a scene was being filmed on the Orca, Hooper and Quint attempted to hunt the shark on, it started to sink. Dinghies were sent to help the actors off the boat, but the film reels were almost damaged in the process. Over the panic, it became a case of 'sod the actors, save the film!' Fortunately, the crew managed to get the reels to New York to be recovered, with no actors drowning in the process.

Literally everything could have gone wrong, did. The film ended up costing

"EVERYTHING THAT COULD HAVE GONE WRONG DID"

WHAT THE HELL?

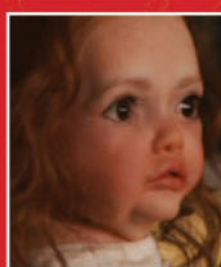
Five unintentionally creepy animatronics in movies

GIZMO GREMLINS (1984)



1 Pre-midnight gremlins were supposed to be cute and cuddly, but Gizmo, with his giant eyes and ears, is still more creepy than most. The uncanny resemblance to a Furby doesn't help.

RENEE MEE TWILIGHT: BREAKING DAWN - PART 2 (2012)



2 The Cullens' daughter was originally an animatronics, but ultimately it was decided that it was too creepy to use. The CG baby that made it to the film is practically angelic in comparison.

GOOBY GOOBY (2009)



3 Practically no one saw the film, but that's probably for the best. It featured a six-foot tall teddy bear with a tartan scarf and mechanical eyebrows, voiced by Robbie Coltrane.



more than twice the original budget; Shaw had to be flown to Canada on his days off for 'tax reasons'; the shoot, which was scheduled to take 55 days, took 159 because just about everything was unpredictable. Spielberg stayed in Martha's Vineyard throughout filming. 20 years later he said: "If I left the island, I was certain I would never come back."

In a marvelous turn of luck, *Jaws* smashed up film records like it was nobody's business. Within 78 days of its release it became the highest grossing film of all time, and kept the title until *Star Wars: A New Hope* two years later. Over 67 million Americans went to go and see the film during the summer of 1975, and it became the first motion picture to hit the \$100 million mark in rentals. Money kept

coming in, and it did wonders for Martha's Vineyard's tourism. The island's average summer tourist population tripled after the film's release.

It also received a positive response with critics. The respected film critic Roger Ebert called *Jaws* "a sensationally effective action picture, a scary thriller that works all the better because it's populated with characters that have been developed into human beings."

After all the money, effort and broken mechanical sharks that went into making it, *Jaws* was a huge triumph for Universal, Spielberg and the suspense film genre. You'd be hard pressed to find a list of the most influential films that doesn't include it.

Jaws is out now on DVD and Blu-ray.

WATCH FIRST



IT CAME FROM OUTER SPACE (1953)

Carl Gottlieb drew inspiration from the fact that creature was always off-camera in this sci-fi classic.

WATCH NEXT



ALIEN (1979)

Ridley Scott's hit film was pitched to studio executives as 'Jaws in space'.

YOUR TAKE ON THE CLASSIC

WHAT YOU THOUGHT @SCIFINOW



"I saw it on TV when I was about seven and daren't go up to bed afterwards!"
@SarahD_UK



"Love it. Scared the living daylight out of me when I first watched it as a kid. Great movie I still watch now..."
@QuantumOfSoLFCe



"Totally love it! Every time I go deep sea diving I hum the tune from #Jaws!" @spokar



"I hate that it made me terrified of the diving pool when I was a kid. I was convinced it was deep enough for a shark." @Bobbyskizza



"Brilliant film, even now. That opening scene is so scary and you don't even see the shark."
@paul_bowler

FALKOR

THE NEVERENDING STORY (1984)



4 Falkor the Luck Dragon lives on in the hearts of some and the nightmares of others. His incessant winking and suggestive dialogue make him really quite creepy.

BIRD

MARY POPPINS (1964)



5 It's on the nicer end of the creepy scale, but still worth a mention: the bird from the A Spoonful of Sugar sequence was the first animatronics to be featured in a motion picture.

WES CRAVEN'S NEW NIGHTMARE

The poster features a large, close-up, red-tinted face of Freddy Kruever with a menacing expression. In the foreground, his iconic mechanical glove with sharp blades is prominently displayed. At the bottom, a man and a young boy are seen from behind, standing in a dark room and looking into a bright, arched doorway. The overall color scheme is dominated by dark reds, blacks, and oranges.

This Time
Staying Awake
Won't Save
You.

FLASHBACK

WES CRAVEN'S NEW NIGHTMARE

BY THE NINETIES, FREDDY KRUEGER HAD BECOME MORE OF A WISE-CRACKING JOKE THAN A SINISTER THREAT. THEN, ORIGINAL CREATOR WES CRAVEN CAME UP WITH THE IDEA OF REINVENTING HIS BOOGEYMAN AS A MALEVOLENT ENTITY WHO CROSSES OVER INTO THE REAL WORLD. WE TALK TO CRAVEN ABOUT DREAMING UP NEW NIGHTMARE AND LEADING LADY HEATHER LANGENKAMP...

WORDS OLIVER PFEIFFER

Apart from co-writing the superior second sequel *A Nightmare On Elm Street 3: Dream Warriors*, Wes Craven wisely stayed away from the franchise he helped create after directing the chilling original classic *A Nightmare On Elm Street* in 1984. In the decade (and five subsequent sequels) since his breakout hit, the once terrifying threat of his clawed creation Freddy Krueger had largely withered away, leaving behind something more closely resembling a court jester.

"There was a little bit of circus involved, and I thought the scripts were kind of thin and the production values were getting thinner," considers Craven on the sequels. "Over the course of the series, Freddy became pulled away from the original primal terror and made into a bit of a buffoon."

The coffin appeared to have been permanently nailed shut on the pizza-faced fiend following 1991's *Freddy's Dead: The Final Nightmare*, which had a 3D head-exploding finale that saw Krueger killed by his own claw. However, due in part to the subsequent critical onslaught that film received, New Line Cinema CEO Bob Shaye thought the character was worthy of a more fitting finale. This is when he contacted Craven.

"Bob called and said he was thinking about doing one final film. However, the character had been killed off, and they didn't know what to do," explains the director. "So I went back and looked at all the sequels for a through-line for a story, but couldn't see one. Then I had lunch with Bob, Heather Langenkamp and Robert

Englund, and what was really interesting was how Freddy and the series had impacted the lives of the people who made it."



The director was also sensitive to conservative groups at the time who blamed horror films for influencing violence, with the consensus that they should be held accountable. "They saw horror films as products instead of art and that [the filmmakers] should be sued," continues Craven. "My feeling was all these horrible things are inherent in the experience of mankind, that they have to be dealt with by art because art makes some sort of sense of it all, and that narrative protects the psyche in a way because narratives are structured by human beings."

A breakthrough came when Craven considered what would happen to the culture of horror movies if they were somehow banned and all that fear were to be suppressed. "I started asking myself, 'Well, if you ban scary movies, what might that do to a culture that can't express that?' The feeling was if you're going to ban Freddy he will come into your real life in some other form. That's the way I got through from one world to another. So Freddy now had the power to attack the people who had portrayed him."

Thus the postmodern concept for the then proposed final film in the *Nightmare On Elm Street* franchise was conceived. Wes Craven's *New Nightmare* would be set in the faux-real world, where the razor-clawed antagonistic creation tabs into our world and haunts the dreams of the actors and creators behind the now defunct *Elm Street* series. In a further twist, actors and

producers from the original film would be portraying themselves in the new movie.

"Wes was experimenting with that breaking of the fourth wall, and bringing Freddy into real-life was the next step to make the story new," says Langenkamp, who immortalised lead heroine Nancy in the first and third *Elm Street* films in the original series, and returned as herself in *New Nightmare*. "I certainly felt that Nancy had become part of me, and that I've put so much of myself into her that there was this blurred line with how much you feel like your character. A lot of it was creating a character that was as close to me as possible without doing a reality TV show."

In *New Nightmare*, Heather is harassed by phone calls from a ➤

Wes Craven's *New Nightmare* saw Freddy entering the real world.



➤ person claiming to be Freddy. However, while actor Robert Englund returns as a version of himself, his portrayal of 'Freddy' would be a purely malevolent personification of the original antagonist. "Ultimately, in this film Freddy is not Freddy, but the entities of whatever it is that are representative of Freddy," underlines Craven. "It was an attempt to show Freddy the way he really was, so we changed his make-up and the colours of his costumes." This resulted in a far darker and more slicker-looking demonic variation of the character, with the infamous claw now spliced into the entity's hand.

Another intricate portrayal would be that of Craven himself, who has a central scene with Langenkamp at his home in the film. Heather confronts the filmmaker regarding the development of a new *Elm Street* script he's secretly working on, the events of which have taken on a life of their own. "I wanted to play myself as half of a confidant and half of a person determined to make his own movie, no matter what it might cost Heather," he explains. "I thought that would be a fun twist." In earlier versions of the script, Craven's character was more of a victim in which he went to certain extremes to stay awake. "There was a scene where I was in this van driven by disciples who were helping to keep Freddy away from me, and I'd cut my eyelids off!" he reveals. "The whole experience was fun, and made me have much more respect for what actors do."

To add to the increasingly overwhelming sense of reality, a scene even took place at New Line Cinema headquarters, where Bob Shaye tries to coax Langenkamp into playing Nancy one last time. While earlier in the film events take place on the back lots of the actual production, with the *New Nightmare* crew clearly visible and seen walking and talking in the background. To coin an apt line from *Scream 4*, "How meta can you get!"



Out of all the postmodern shenanigans came some genuinely creepy moments that cleverly harken back to the original movie. At one point, Heather catches her young son watching her portrayal of Nancy in *A Nightmare on Elm Street* on the television, then akin to her character she similarly receives a call from Freddy in the real world of the film. Other *Elm Street* references include a Freddy phone tongue kiss cameo and a recreation of the notorious first murder from the original, where a character is hauled up the walls and slashed to death on the ceiling.

Not that all the scares are throwbacks. Langenkamp's on-screen son Dylan (Miko Hughes) is also haunted by Freddy, and has some particularly hair-raising moments, including a memorable scene in a playground where the seemingly possessed kid mounts the spire of a jungle gym. Additionally, a key death sequence on a deserted highway, where the disembodied claw of Freddy slices through the driver's seat and into the victim's chest, remains one of the most visceral and gut-wrenching moments in the series.

In *New Nightmare's* dream world denouncement, Heather's house morphs into Nancy's on-screen *Elm Street* residence, with the actress once again becoming Nancy and John Saxon reprising his role as her sheriff father. Unbeknownst to them, they start re-enacting the dialogue from the climatic scenes of *A Nightmare*

On *Elm Street*, which enables Freddy to be fully released into the real world. A literal tongue-twisting dream climax – underlining the always-present sexual undercurrent between Freddy and Nancy – however, was perhaps a humiliation too far for its star. "That's the one scene I have nightmares about," reveals Langenkamp. "The fact of that tongue being around your head and that whole notion of Nancy being subjected to that final humiliation... of all the scenes I've filmed, that was the worst. It was a horrible day."

Whether a gigantic tongue had an influence on *New Nightmare's* lukewarm performance at the US box office upon its release on 14 October 1994 is doubtful, but it's disappointing that audiences were unable to

connect with Craven's horror innovation, particularly as it was the intelligent precursor to the far more popular post-modern *Scream* series. Perhaps there were just too many *Elm Street* sequels that hindered all the clever connections between Craven's original classic and his modern re-telling.

"Wes has often told me that he'd like to see *A Nightmare On Elm Street* and *New Nightmare* book-ended as their own two films, as they belong together," says Langenkamp. "It would make a very interesting double-header," underlines Craven. "I think that the references between the two would be much more apparent, and *New Nightmare* depended on the audience having seen the first one, and to remember

New Nightmare was as much a love letter to the original as it was its own film.



"THE WHOLE EXPERIENCE WAS FUN, AND MADE ME HAVE MORE RESPECT FOR WHAT ACTORS DO"

WES CRAVEN



Despite the ridiculous premise, it's no less terrifying than previous instalments.



The target of Freddy's attention is Dylan, the young son of actress Heather Langenkamp.

what was said so seeing them back-to-back would be clearer and more fun."

While the instalments in between the original *Elm Street* and *New Nightmare* were sporadically entertaining, with some gruesomely inventive death sequences, Langenkamp acknowledges their unrelenting and repetitive nature. "I don't think they could've had any more sequels where Freddy tortures the dreams of teens – it was already becoming so old and tired," she says. "I don't know how Wes did it, but he managed to find an idea that was so fresh and new that it was really revolutionary, and I do believe that *New Nightmare* will go down as being a very important development in the whole horror movie genre."

Not that the actress, who excelled in playing herself in *New Nightmare*, has ruled out ever playing Nancy again in the future. "I feel like she's my destiny in some ways, because the films have become so important to people that if there was a story that accurately could continue the saga, that would give everyone one more glimpse into this battle between good and evil that Wes created, I would definitely do it," she claims. "I kind of daydream about it sometimes when I'm around Robert Englund, and secretly think if anything, he really needs to play Freddy one more time. His Freddy is such a great character – I would hate to think we wouldn't see it again." 🐾



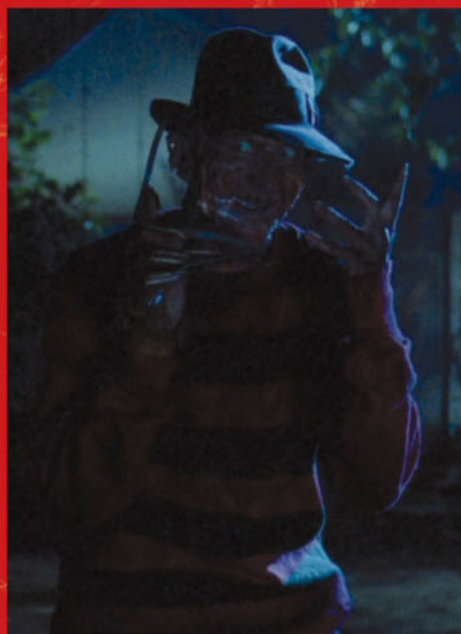
FREDDY'S EVOLUTION THROUGH THE YEARS

How the stripey-jumpered boogeyman has changed

A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET (1984)

Undisputedly, the original remains the sharp and sinister best incarnation of our razor-clawed boogeyman. The humorous quips are welcome sporadic (in fact, Krueger says very little at all) while Freddy gets down to business haunting the dreams of his teenage prey.

Best Krueger line: "I'm your boyfriend now Nancy!"



FREDDY'S DEAD: THE FINAL NIGHTMARE (1991)

A low point for all involved, this sixth instalment in the film series intentionally etched into Warner Bros cartoon territory,

and featured a Freddy as quirky as they come. It also attempted to delve into the creepy origin of de-masked Krueger's child-killer tendencies, but perhaps casting Alice Cooper as Krueger senior was a step too far.

Best Krueger line: "Might be your dream, but it's my rules!"



WES CRAVEN'S NEW NIGHTMARE (1994)

Strips Freddy down to his essential bare bones, in the process revealing the pure, unmitigated evil of the dream serial killer. Jokes aside, this is an

entity not worth fucking with.

Best Krueger line: "Hey Dylan. Ever play 'skin the cat'?"



FREDDY VS JASON (2003)

As his adversary is a wordless brute with a hockey mask, you welcome the return of some humorous articulation from classic Freddy at

his comic best.

Best Krueger line: "You ugly little shit. Now there's a face only a mother could love."



A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET (2010)

A redundant attempt to reboot Krueger as a back-to-basics, straight-talking malevolent threat (with Jackie Earle Harley in the role)

this remake proved that we do appreciate a touch of flamboyance to our character – not a lot, but a little goes a long way. This was one remake that failed to make a splash, only gaining mediocre reviews and not being a patch on the original.

Best Krueger line: "Nice, try Nancy. Now let me take a stab!"



A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET 3: DREAM Warriors (1987)

Although arguably the best sequel from the original series, *Dream Warriors* was responsible for

developing Freddy's more comedic wise-cracking tendencies that further instalments capitalised on to the upmost extreme.

Best Krueger line: "Welcome to prime time, bitch!"



FREDDY'S NIGHTMARES (1988-90)

Our razor-handed fiend-turned TV host revels in playing the quipping keeper and mid-way commentator in this largely

derogatory *Tales From The Crypt*-type TV series.

Best Krueger line: "Shut up bitch! He can't hear you!"



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AFTER THE STORM

1. Which two main characters were created as a result of the storm?
2. What did the giant suit-wearing white rabbit from Richard Saunders' house party use as a weapon?
3. What power did Kelly originally gain when the storm hit?
4. Alex receives the ability of power removal after having which organ transplanted?
5. Brian was the first person to go public about the effects of the storm, but what was his power?

COMMUNITY

6. According to Nathan, why was he given a community service order?

7. What does Greg teach Finn to play on the piano?
8. How many main characters have lived in the community centre at some point?
9. Who accidentally summons the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse to the community centre?
10. What kind of animal was Bruno before the storm turned him into a human?

THE KILLERS

11. Who is the only probation worker not to be killed by the *Misfits* gang?
12. What does Jess use to kill Rudy's second doppelganger, Psycho Rudy?
13. After Simon kills Sally, where does the gang hide her body until they can bury it?

14. What kills Nathan the first time he dies, when he finally figures out what his power is?
15. What is the name of the cat that Curtis brings back to life with his resurrection power?

THE GANG

16. Which two characters appeared in the most number of episodes with 25 each?
17. What does Nathan often call Simon when he can't remember his name?
18. What is Simon doing when Alisha discovers that he is Superhoodie?
19. Where does Rudy first meet his girlfriend Nadine?
20. What name does Curtis go by while using his gender-swap power?

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SIMON

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KELLY

Caring too much about what people think is your downfall, but you can take them in a fight. You might not know what brunch is, but you know what really matters; you're a fookin' rocket scientist after all.

6-10

RUDY

When faced with difficult tasks you tend to take the easy way out. You are good at thinking on your feet, but your tendency to make things up as you go along often gets you into trouble.

0-5

FINN

You have good intentions and a big heart, but everything around you keeps falling apart. You may have one of the coolest powers, but you're going to have to learn to control it.

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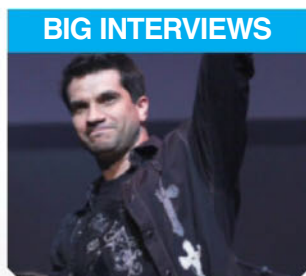
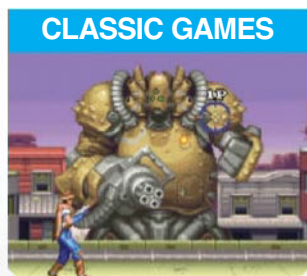


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- Third Row:** A black t-shirt with a white skull, a blue t-shirt with "FLUX CAPACITOR", and a black t-shirt with "WET NOT TH KANSAS MOVIE".
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Cover image

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Circulation

Head Of Circulation Darren Pearce

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Production

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Founders

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Printing & Distribution

Wyndeham Heron Ltd, Bentalls Complex, Colchester Road, Heybridge, Maldon, Essex, CM9 4NW ☎ 01621 877 777

Distributed in the UK, Eire & the Rest of the World by Marketforce, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London, SE1 0SU ☎ 0203 148 3300, www.marketforce.co.uk

Distributed in Australia by Network Services (a division of Bauer Media Group), Level 21, Civic Tower, 66-68 Goulburn Street, Sydney, New South Wales 2000. ☎ +61 2 8667 5288

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